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Alfred. W. W. Christopher.

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Mrs. Dyer

To the Bodleian Library
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THE REFORMED PASTOR;

A DISCOURSE ON THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

HINTS OF ADVICE TO STUDENTS *FOR THE MINISTRY,*

AND TO

TUTORS OF ACADEMIES.

Written by the Reverend and Pious

Mr. RICHARD BAXTER.

Abridged and reduced to a new Method

By SAMUEL PALMER.

THE SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED.

London:

PRINTED BY S. COUCHMAN, THROGMORTON-STREET,

FOR WILLIAM BAYNES, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1808.

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PREFACE

By the COMPILER of this Abridgment*.

MR. BAXTER'S practical writings have generally been eſteemed, by pious readers, in proportion as they have been known; and it is a favourable omen that they have of late riſen conſiderably in price. His *Gildas Salvianus*, or REFORMED PASTOR, is a work peculiarly intereſting to chriſtian miniſters of all denominations, and conſequently to the people of their charge.

The occaſion on which it was compoſed, was as follows: the aſſociated miniſters in Worceſterſhire and the adjacent parts, agreed to aſſemble at Worceſter, *December* 4, 1655, to keep a day of faſting and prayer, particularly with a view to an engagement into which they had entered, to exert

* This Preface is now conſiderably ſhortened.

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themſelves more than they had done, in their miniſterial duty, and particularly in that of perſonal inſtruction. On this occaſion they requeſted Mr. *Baxter* to preach to them. He accordingly drew up the ſubſtance of this diſcourſe on the paſtoral office. But being prevented, by the increaſe of a painful diſorder, from meeting his brethren, they united in deſiring him to publiſh what he had prepared, which he did with conſiderable enlargements.

He himſelf, as he tells us, towards the cloſe, "apprehended this to be one of the greateſt and beſt works, that he ever put his hand to," and he had the pleaſure to find it eminently uſeful. In the account given of his publications, in his Life, he ſays, "I have great cauſe to be thankful to God, for the ſucceſs of that book, as hoping many thouſand ſouls are the better for it, in that it prevailed upon many miniſters to ſet upon that work, which I there exhorted them to. Even from beyond the ſeas, I have had letters of requeſt, to direct them how they might conduct that work, according as that book had convinced them, it was their duty."

Dr. BATES, in his funeral ſermon for Mr. *Baxter*, after a high encomium on his other works, pronounces the Reformed Paſtor "An accompliſhed

ed model of an evangelical minister;" and he adds, from his intimate acquaintance with the author, "The idea of a faithful minister delineated in that book, was a copy taken from the life; from his own zealous example."

Many other testimonies to the excellence and usefulness of this piece, from competent judges, might easily be produced; but that of Dr. *Doddridge* will serve instead of a thousand, as few ministers ever acted more conformably than himself to the rules here laid down*. In the character given of authors in his Lectures on the Ministerial Office, the Doctor has the following passage concerning The Reformed Pastor. "It is a most extraordinary performance, and should be read by every young minister before he takes a people under his stated care; and I think the practical part of it should be reviewed every two or three years: for nothing has a greater tendency to awaken a minister to that zeal in his work, for want of which many good men are but shadows of what, by the blessing of God, they might be, if the maxims and measures laid down in that incomparable treatise were strenuously pursued†."

But

* See Orton's Life of Doddridge.

† The above passage is omitted in Dr. *Williams's* edition of Dr. *Doddridge's Lectures*, from whence it may be presumed

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But valuable as this work is, it partakes of the faults common to moſt of the writings of the age, and of Mr. *Baxter*'s in particular: prolixity, want of juſt method, frequent repetitions, long digreſſions, &c. which render his compoſitions far leſs agreeable to modern readers than they otherwiſe would have been. Of theſe he himſelf was very ſenſible, and on a review of his works he laments them as the effect of the great haſte in which he uſually wrote, in conſequence of his many other engagements, and the diſorders to which he was ſubject, by reaſon of which he viewed himſelf as ſtanding continually on the borders of the grave. Conſidering all which, it is wonderful he wrote ſo much and ſo well as he did. On account of the above circumſtances, Mr. *Baxter*'s works admit of being abridged to great advantage, as ſeveral of them have been by Mr. FAWCETT, one of his ſucceſſors, who imbibed much of his ſpirit, and cloſely followed his ſteps. The *Reformed Paſtor* as much needed abridgment as any of the author's writings. This I at firſt undertook for private uſe only; but ſeveral judicious friends, to whom I had lent the copy, ſtrongly recommended the publication of it.

that he had not a complete copy of them. Indeed the author never prepared or intended them for publication, and the MS. copies greatly vary.

It

It will be proper here, to give the reader ſome account of the manner in which this work has been executed. What was foreign, or redundant, is omitted; ſentences that were too long, are ſhortened or divided; the conſtruction of ſuch as were obſcure, is made plainer by tranſpoſition; and obſolete or uncouth words and phraſes, are changed. But the greateſt liberties have been taken with regard to the method, which is almoſt wholly new, for the ſake of leſſening the number of ſubdiviſions, and bringing into one point of view all the author's thoughts on the ſame ſubjects, which were ſometimes ſcattered in three or four different parts of the treatiſe; ſo that many paſſages, and whole heads of diſcourſe, are tranſpoſed with freedom. But the reader may be aſſured, that great care has been taken to preſerve the author's ideas, and that no additions have been made, except in the Titles of the Chapters, but where the connexion required the inſertion of a few words, which are diſtinguiſhed by [crotchets.] In ſhort, this is as really Mr. *Baxter's* work, as that publiſhed by himſelf.

The APPENDIX is principally an abſtract of the author's *Counſel to Young Men*, taken from the 4th Vol. of his Works, p. 16, &c. It is introduced here, not merely as having ſome connexion with the ſubject of this Treatiſe; but, becauſe the au-

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thor had given ſome valuable hints to *Students* and *Tutors*, in the *Reformed Paſtor*, which could not properly be brought into this abridgment, but in a ſupplementary form. They are both here interwoven together.

Some parts of this work are greatly diſproportioned to others, and ſeveral matters of great importance are but juſt mentioned, *e. g.* Part II. Chap. I. But the reader ſhould recollect, that the author did not propoſe this (to uſe his own words) "as a directory for the whole miniſterial "work," his chief object being to recommend a more ſtrict attention to the duties of private inſpection, and perſonal inſtruction.

It is probable, that many readers will think, that ſome things here retained, on theſe heads, are either unneceſſary, or impracticable in moſt places, in the preſent day. But what theſe are, the editor apprehends it is the Reader's buſineſs, and not his, to determine. That may be needleſs, or impoſſible in ſome places and circumſtances, which in others may be eaſy and uſeful. If, to particular perſons, any thing here retained ſhould appear impracticable, or even imprudent, it is hoped that they will not on this account throw aſide the book; nor, becauſe they cannot do every thing here enjoined, determine to do nothing. The author's

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thor's directions may be applied to ſome good purpoſe, though not juſt in the particular way he propoſes. Much more might certainly be done than generally is done, in regard to that perſonal inſtruction which he ſo ſtrongly recommends, and ſo diligently practiſed; eſpecially by the pious Eſtabliſhed Clergy, who have generally more of that influence over their people which Mr. *Baxter* had, than Diſſenting Miniſters commonly poſſeſs. However, different ſituations and circumſtances muſt be allowed to make a conſiderable difference; of which miniſters are left to judge for themſelves, and to act accordingly.

S. P.

Hackney,
Jan. 13, 1766.

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POSTSCRIPT

TO THIS NEW EDITION.

THE former edition of this Work, having been many years out of print, and difficult to be procured, I have been frequently urged to publiſh a new one. This I at length determined upon doing, and had reviſed the copy for that purpoſe; but was induced to deſiſt, by the publication of another abridgment of the ſame work, by the late Mr. *Rutherford*, a very worthy miniſter in Mr. *Weſley*'s connexion, whoſe laſt declining days were employed in preparing it for the preſs; not knowing, it ſhould ſeem, that any other ſimilar work had ever been undertaken. It was expected that this of his, would have ſuperſeded the republication of mine. But though it is doubtleſs a valuable performance, the ſize is ſo little reduced, and the pious editor has added ſo many other pieces to it, that, with the memoirs of his own life, it is in fact made larger than Mr. Baxter's original work. On this account, ſeveral miniſters were of opinion, that

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that there was ſtill ſufficient reaſon for reprinting my abridgment. I have, therefore, after delaying ſeveral months for the other to circulate, committed it to the preſs, without any material alteration. I have, however, carefully reviſed the book, and made ſuch corrections, as it might be ſuppoſed, a work printed at ſo early a period of life, might require. A very few ſhort paſſages have been inſerted from Mr. *Rutherford's* edition; as alſo a few brief Notes; but very little is omitted, though I have in ſome places further compreſſed the language. On the whole, I flattered myſelf, that thoſe of my brethren, who eſpouſed the Work as firſt publiſhed, will think it improved in this edition, and will concur with the editor, in wiſhing its ſucceſs.

Hackney,
March 27, 1808.

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EXTRACTS

FROM THE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

PERHAPS the freedom with which the following treatiſe is written may be thought by ſome to need an apology. It may be ſaid "That I ought not to have ſpoken ſo plainly and ſharply; eſpecially againſt the SINS of miniſters, in a diſcourſe publiſhed to to the world: at leaſt that it ſhould have been done in another language, and not in the ears of the vulgar, when ſo many are endeavouring to bring the miniſt y into contempt, and our people are too prone to hearken to their ſuggeſtions." I anſwer, it has not been inſinuated that all miniſters are guilty of the ſeveral faults that have been cenſured: and thoſe who are not guilty are expreſsly excepted. There are many humble men who are willing to know their ſins that they may forſake them, and their duty that they may perform it. As to others, where

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where the ſin is open in the ſight of all the world, it is in vain to hide it; the attempt will but aggravate our guilt and increaſe our ſhame. If the miniſters of England had ſinned only in *Latin*, I would have made ſhift to admoniſh them in *Latin*, or elſe have ſaid nothing to them; but if they will ſin in *Engliſh*, they muſt hear of it in *Engliſh*. If we will not find out our ſin, it will ſurely find out us. Unpardoned guilt will never let us reſt, though we are at ever ſo much care and coſt to hide it. 'He that covereth his ſins ſhall not proſper; but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them 'ſhall find mercy.' If we be too tender of ourſelves and loth to confeſs, God will be leſs tender of us, and will indite our confeſſions for us. He will either force our conſciences to confeſs, or his judgments will proclaim our iniquities to the world. Indeed the tongues of many are already at work to proclaim our ſin. Becauſe we will not ſpeak the truth, they will ſpeak more than the truth. The world knows that we are ſinners: as none can ſuppoſe us perfect, ſo our particular ſins are too apparent to the world. And is it not fit that they ſhould ſee that we are *penitent* ſinners? Penitent confeſſion and ſpeedy reformation are the means to ſilence our adverſaries, as well as to repair our credit with wiſe and godly men.

If any who have ſet their hands to this ſacred work,

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work, give themſelves up to ſelf-ſeeking, negligence, pride, and other ſins, it is neceſſary to admoniſh them. If we could ſee them reform without reproof, we would gladly forbear to publiſh their faults. But if reproof itſelf is ineffectual, it is time to ſharpen the remedy. To bear with the vices of miniſters, is to haſten the ruin of the church; for nothing contributes more to the undoing of the people than the depravity of their Guides; nor can we more effectually promote a reformation, than by endeavouring to reform the Leaders of the church. For my part, I have herein done as I would be done by. I do not blame my brethren, as ſome others do, to make them contemptible and odious; but to heal thoſe evils that would make them ſo. It is not to indulge my own inclination, for I diſpleaſe myſelf as much as I do ſome of them; and would rather have the eaſe and peace of ſilence if it might conſiſt with duty. It is merely the neceſſity of men's ſouls, and the proſperity of the church, which forces me to this arrogance and immodeſty, if it may be called ſuch. When the honour of God and the everlaſting happineſs of ſo many perſons are concerned, who that has a tongue can be ſilent? If thouſands of you were in a leaking ſhip, and thoſe who ſhould pump out the water and ſtop the leaks were ſporting, or quarrelling, or ſleeping, or only favouring themſelves in their labour,

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labour, to the hazard of you all, would you not call them to their work? If you uſed ſharpneſs with the ſlothful, would you think that man in his ſenſes who took it ill? who accuſed you of pride, ſelf-conceit, or want of good manners for talking ſo ſaucily to your fellow workmen? If they charged you with diminiſhing their reputation, would you not ſay, "The work muſt be done, or we are all dead men! The ſhip is ready to ſink; and do you talk of reputation? Had you rather hazard yourſelves and us than hear of your ſloth?"—This, brethren, is the caſe with us. The work of the Lord muſt needs be done. Souls muſt not periſh whilſt you mind your worldly buſineſs, take your eaſe, or quarrel with your brethren; nor muſt we be ſilent, for fear of ſeeming uncivil, while men are haſtened by you to perdition. If you had choſen ſome other calling, and only had ſinned by yourſelves, and periſhed alone, it had not been ſo neceſſary to moleſt you; but if you will enter into an office which is for the neceſſary preſervation of us all, ſo that by letting you alone in your ſins we muſt give up the church to apparent hazard, do not blame us if we talk to you more freely than you would have us to do. There is no bearing with your remiſſneſs. How much ſoever it may diſpleaſe you, take it how you will, you muſt be told of it; and if that will not do, you muſt be told of it

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it more closely still.—If you have so much greater business that you cannot ordinarily have time to do the ministerial work, you should not undertake the office; for ministers are men 'separated' 'to the Gospel of Christ, and must give themselves *wholly* to these things.'

TO THE LAY-READER.

I dare not let this work come into your hands, without a word of caution and advice, lest you should misunderstand, or misapply it.

Do not entertain any unworthy thoughts of your pastors, because we here confess our own sins, and aggravate them in order to our humiliation and reformation. You know that we are *men* and not angels, whom God has put into the office of your spiritual guides; and you know that we are imperfect men. Let Papists and others pretend to sinless perfection, we dare not do it, but confess that we are sinners. And we should heartily rejoice to find the signs even of imperfect sincerity in them that make so confident a pretence as this; nay, if in some of them, we could find common honesty, and a freedom from the crying abominations of the ungodly; such as cruelty, lying, slandering, &c. Yet some of these people,

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people, becauſe we confeſs that we have ſinned in neglecting the work of the Lord, pretend to prove us deceivers from our own confeſſion: whereas God ſaith, 'If we confeſs our ſins, he 'is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins;' but that 'he that ſaith he hath no ſin deceiveth him-'ſelf, and the truth is not in him. — For our parts, we believe that 'in many things we offend 'all.' We profeſs to know but in 'part; to 'have our treaſure in earthen veſſels;' and to be inſufficient for theſe things [about which we are employed:] ſee therefore that you love and imitate the holineſs of your paſtors [as far as you diſcern it] but take not occaſion of diſeſteeming or reproaching them for their infirmities.

Beware of thoſe (particularly the Papiſts) whoſe deſign is to unſettle you in matters of religion, and, in order to it, to bring you firſt to ſuſpect, and then to contemn and reject your teachers.— Let me warn you, as you love your ſouls, that you keep cloſe to ſcripture and a faithful Miniſtry. And let me tell you, that notwithſtanding all thoſe ſins of ours which are here confeſſed, the known world hath not a more able, faithful, godly miniſtry than *Britain* hath at this day. If at the Synod of *Dort* the *Clericus Anglicanus* was called the *Stupor mundi* *. (before all

* The Engliſh clergy were called the wonder of the world.

thoſe

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thoſe ignorant and ſcandalous men were caſt out) what may we call it *now?*

Brethren, let me deal freely with you. The ungrateful contempt of a faithful Miniſtry, is the ſhame of thouſands in this land; and if a thorough repentance prevent it not, they ſhall better know in Hell, whether ſuch miniſters were their friends or foes; and what they would have done for them if their counſel had been heard. [We are told concerning the Jews that] when 'they 'mocked the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed 'his words, and abuſed his prophets, the wrath 'of the Lord roſe againſt his people, till there 'was no remedy *.'—Shall miniſters ſtudy, and preach, and pray for you, and ſhall they be deſpiſed? — When they have the God of heaven and their own conſcience to witneſs that they deſire 'not your's but you;' that they are 'willing to ſpend and be ſpent' for your ſakes; that all the wealth in the world would not be regarded by them in compariſon with your ſalvation; and that all their labours and ſufferings are for your welfare; if yet they ſhall be requited with your contempt and ſcorn, or diſcouraged by your unteachableneſs—ſee who will prove the loſers in the end. When God himſelf ſhall juſtify and

* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.

commend

commend them with a 'Well done good and 'faithful ſervant,' let thoſe that reproached, deſpiſed, and condemned them, defend their faces from ſhame, and their conſciences from the accuſations of horrid ingratitude, if they can!

Let me adviſe you to obey your faithful teachers, and improve their help for your ſalvation while you have it. Take heed that you refuſe not to learn when they are willing to teach. Particularly ſee to it that you refuſe not to ſubmit to them in this duty of *private inſtruction*, which is more eſpecially recommended in this treatiſe. Go to them when they deſire you, and be thankful to them for their help; and at other times, when you need their advice, go to them and aſk it of your own accord. Their office is, to be your guides in the way to life. If you ſeek not their direction, it ſeems that you either deſpiſe ſalvation itſelf, or elſe are ſo proud as to think yourſelves ſufficient to be your own directors.—Shall God, in mercy, ſend you leaders to guide you in the way to glory, and will you ſtoutly ſend them back, or refuſe their aſſiſtance, and ſay, "We have no need of their direction?"—Is it for their own eaſe or profit that they trouble you, or is it not for your everlaſting gain? Remember what Chriſt hath ſaid to his meſſengers,—'He that 'deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.' If your obſtinate refuſal

refuſal of their inſtruction cauſe them to bear witneſs againſt you in Judgment, look you to it and anſwer it as you can. For my own part, I would not be then in your caſe for all the world. ——If you read this Book, remember that the duty which you find to belong to miniſters, doth alſo ſhew what belongs to *yourſelves*; for it cannot be our duty to teach and admoniſh, if it be not yours to hear and learn.

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THE

THE

REFORMED PASTOR.

ACTS XX. 28.

Take heed therefore to yourſelves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers; to feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.

Reverend and dearly-beloved Brethren,

IF the people of our charge muſt teach, admoniſh and 'exhort one another daily;' no doubt teachers themſelves may do it, as brethren in office, as well as in faith, without any ſupereminence in power or degree. We have the ſame ſins to mortify, and the ſame graces to be quickened and corroborated, as they have. We have greater works than they have to do, greater difficulties to overcome, and no leſs neceſſity is laid upon us. We have therefore need to be warned and awakened, if not inſtructed, as well as they. So that, I confeſs, I think we ſhould meet together more frequently, if we had nothing to do but this. And we ſhould

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deal as plainly and closely with one another, as the most serious among us do with our Flocks; lest, if they only have the sharp admonitions and reproofs, they only should be found and lively in the faith. This was PAUL's judgment. I need no other proof of it, than this rousing, heart-melting exhortation to the Ephesian elders.——A short sermon, but not soon learned. Had the bishops and teachers of the church but thoroughly learned it, (though to the neglect of many a volume which has taken up their time and helped them to greater applause in the world) how happy had it been for the church and for themselves!

I shall now touch upon no part of it but my Text.——The persons here addressed under the characters of *overseers* or *bishops*, were officers appointed to teach and guide the Ephesian church in the way to salvation; and are the same that in the 17th verse are called *Elders*. So that all who statedly officiate in the same work and capacity, as the Pastors of a particular church, may consider themselves as included.—The exhortation here addressed to such, consists of two parts.

The FIRST is—That they should take heed to THEMSELVES:

The SECOND—That they should take heed to all the FLOCK; to feed the church of God.

The

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The MOTIVES to which are—their own engagement and relation as overſeers—the authority of him who called them to the office; the Holy Ghoſt—the dignity of the object; the church of God—the tender regard of Chriſt to it, and the price he paid for it; he purchaſed it with his own blood.

PART THE FIRST.

Of the Duty of Chriſtian Miniſters with regard to THEMSELVES.

THE apoſtle in the firſt place exhorts the paſtors or overſeers of the churches of Chriſt to 'take heed to *themſelves*.' The word in general denotes, applying the mind to any thing with ſtrict and cloſe attention. Here it ſignifies, diligently to watch over ourſelves; our own conduct and behaviour, our heart and life: all our tempers, words, and actions. I ſhall briefly ſhew you wherein this muſt be done, and give ſome reaſons for this part of the work. But for the ſake of brevity, I ſhall adjoin the application to the explication. And I beſeech you, brethren, let your hearts attend, as well as your underſtandings.

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I. Above all, ſee to it that a working of ſaving grace be thoroughly wrought on your own ſouls.

Take heed to yourſelves leſt you be ſtrangers to the effectual working of that goſpel which you preach; and leſt, while you proclaim to the world the neceſſity of a Saviour, your own hearts ſhould neglect him, and you ſhould miſs of an intereſt in him and his ſaving benefits. Be that firſt, yourſelves, which you perſuade your hearers to be; believe that, which you daily perſuade them to believe; and heartily entertain that Chriſt and Spirit, which you offer to them.

You have a heaven to win or loſe yourſelves, and ſouls that muſt be happy or miſerable for ever; it therefore concerns you to begin at home, and take heed to yourſelves. It is poſſible (though an unuſual thing) that preaching well may ſucceed to the ſalvation of others without the holineſs of your own hearts and lives; but it is impoſſible it ſhould ſave your own ſouls. Though it be promiſed to 'them that turn many to righteouſneſs' that they 'ſhall ſhine as ſtars,' it is on ſuppoſition that they be firſt turned to it themſelves. Believe it, Sirs, 'God is no reſpecter of perſons.' A holy calling will not ſave an unholy man. God never did ſave any man for being a preacher, nor becauſe he was an able preacher; but becauſe he was a juſtified, ſanctified man, and conſequently faithful in his maſter's

maſter's work. Nor can it be reaſonably expected that he ſhould ſave any for offering ſalvation to others, while they refuſe it themſelves; or for telling others thoſe truths which they themſelves neglect and abuſe. If you ſtand at the door of the kingdom of grace to light others in, but will not go in yourſelves, you ſhall knock at the gates of glory in vain. Many a preacher is now in hell, who called upon his hearers a hundred times to uſe their utmoſt care and diligence to avoid that place of torment. Preachers of the goſpel muſt be judged by the goſpel:—muſt be ſentenced on the ſame terms, and dealt with as ſeverely as other men. 'Many at that day ſhall ſay, Lord, have 'we not propheſied in thy name?' Who ſhall be anſwered, 'I never knew you: depart from me 'ye workers of iniquity.' And what caſe can be more wretched than that man's, who made it his very trade and calling to proclaim ſalvation, and help others to attain it, and yet after all is excluded from it himſelf?

It is a dreadful thing to be an unſanctified profeſſor; but much more to be an unſanctified Preacher. Do not you, who know this to be your character, tremble when you open the Bible, leſt you ſhould read there the ſentence of your own condemnation? When you pen your ſermons, you are drawing up indictments againſt yourſelves. When you are arguing againſt ſin, you are aggra-

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vating your own. When you proclaim to your hearers, the riches of Chriſt and his grace, you publiſh your own iniquity in rejecting them, and your own unhappineſs in being deſtitute of them. What can you deviſe to ſay to your hearers, but for the moſt part, it will be againſt your own ſouls? If you mention hell, you mention your own inheritance. If you deſcribe the joys of heaven, you deſcribe your own miſery in having no right to them. O wretched life! that a man ſhould ſtudy and preach againſt himſelf, and ſpend his days in a courſe of ſelf-condemning! A graceleſs unexperienced preacher is one of the moſt unhappy creatures upon earth.

Yet he is ordinarily, the moſt inſenſible of his unhappineſs. He has ſo many counters, that ſeem like the gold of ſaving grace, and ſo many ſplendid ſtones that reſemble the chriſtian's jewels, that he is ſeldom troubled with the thoughts of his poverty; but thinks 'he is rich and wants nothing, 'while he is wretched and miſerable, poor and 'blind and naked.' He is acquainted with the holy ſcriptures; he is exerciſed in holy duties; he lives not in open diſgraceful ſins; he ſerves at God's altar; he reproves other men's faults, and preaches up holineſs of heart and life; and therefore can hardly ſuſpect himſelf to be unholy. How awful the deluſion of ſuch! how aggravated their miſery!—to periſh with the bread of life in their

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their hands, while they offer it to others!—How deplorable! that thoſe ordinances of God, ſhould be the occaſion of their deluſion, which are the appointed means of conviction and ſalvation!—that while they hold the looking-glaſs of the goſpel to others, and ſhew them the true face of their ſouls, they ſhould turn the back part of it towards themſelves, where they can ſee nothing!

Verily it is the common danger and calamity of the church, to have unregenerate and unexperienced paſtors! Many men become preachers, before they are chriſtians; are ſanctified by dedication to the altar as God's prieſts, before they are ſanctified by hearty dedication to Chriſt as his diſciples. Thus they worſhip an unknown God; preach an unknown Saviour; an unknown Spirit; an unknown ſtate of holineſs, and communion with God; and a future glory that is to them unknown, and to be unknown to them for ever.

And can it be expected that ſuch perſons ſhould prove any great bleſſings to the church? How can it be imagined that he is likely to be as ſucceſsful as others, who dealeth not heartily and faithfully in his work? Who never ſoundly believeth what he ſaith, nor is ever truly ſerious, when he ſeemeth moſt diligent? And can you think that any unſanctified man CAN be hearty and ſerious in the miniſterial work? It cannot be. A kind of ſeriouſneſs indeed he may have; ſuch as proceeds from a

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common opinion that the word is true: he may be actuated by a natural fervour, or by ſelfiſh ends: but the ſerioufneſs and fidelity of a ſound believer, who ultimately intends God's honour and men's ſalvation, he cannot have.

O Sirs! all your preaching and perſuading of others will be but dreaming, and trifling hypocriſy, till the work be thoroughly done upon yourſelves. How can you conſtantly apply yourſelves to a work from which your carnal hearts are averſe? How can you, with ſerious fervour, call upon poor ſinners to repent and come to God, who never did either yourſelves? How can you follow them with importunate ſolicitations to forſake ſin, and betake themſelves to a holy life, who never felt the evil of the one, or the worth of the other? And let me tell you, theſe things are never well known till they are FELT; and that he who feels them not himſelf, is not likely to ſpeak feelingly of them to others, or to help others to feel them.

He that does not ſo ſtrongly believe the word of God and the life to come, as to take off his own heart from the vanities of this world, and bring him, with reſolution and diligence, to ſeek his own ſalvation, cannot be expected to be faithful in ſeeking the ſalvation of other men. He that dares to damn himſelf, will dare to let others alone in the way to damnation. He that, with JUDAS, will ſell his maſter for ſilver, will not ſcruple to make mer-

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merchandize of the flock. We may well expect that he will have no pity on others, who is thus wofully cruel to himſelf; and ſurely he is not to be truſted with other men's ſouls, who is unfaithful to his own. It is a very unlikely thing that he will fight againſt Satan with all his might, or do any great harm to his kingdom, who is himſelf a ſervant of Satan and a ſubject of that kingdom; or that he will be true to Chriſt, who is in covenant with his enemy. What prince will chooſe the friends and voluntary ſervants of his enemy to lead his armies in war againſt him? Yet alas! many preachers of the goſpel are enemies to the work of the goſpel which they preach. O how many ſuch traitors have been in the church of Chriſt in all ages, who have done more againſt him under his colours, than they could have done in the open field! Though many of theſe men ſeem excellent preachers, and cry down ſin as loudly as others, yet it is all but an affected fervency, and commonly but a mere ineffectual bawling. A traiterous commander, who ſhooteth nothing againſt the enemy but powder, may cauſe his guns to make as great a report as theirs that are loaded with bullets; but he doth not hurt the enemy by it. So one of theſe men may ſpeak as loud and with as much ſeeming fervency as others; but he will ſeldom do any great execution againſt ſin and Satan.

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No man can fight well but where he hates, or is very angry; much leſs againſt thoſe whom he loves, and loves above all. So that you ſee, an unſanctified man, who loves the enemy, is very unfit to be a leader in Chriſt's army; and he is very unlikely to engage others to renounce the world and the fleſh, who cleaveth to them himſelf as his chief good.

If ſuch a wretched man would take my counſel, he ſhould make a ſtand, and call his heart and life to an account. He ſhould fall a preaching awhile to himſelf, before he preach to others any more. He ſhould conſider, whether 'he that names the 'name of Chriſt' ſhould not 'depart from all ini-'quity?' Whether, 'if he regards iniquity in his 'heart, God will hear his prayers?' And whether a wicked preacher 'ſhall ſtand in the judg-'ment, or a ſinner in the aſſembly of the juſt?' When ſuch thoughts as theſe have entered into his ſoul, and kindly wrought upon his conſcience, I would adviſe him next, to go to the congregation, and there preach over *Origen*'s ſermon on *Pſalm* l. 16, 17. 'But to the wicked, God ſaith, What 'haſt thou to do, to declare my ſtatutes, or that 'thou ſhould'ſt take my covenant into thy mouth? 'Seeing thou hateſt inſtruction, and haſt caſt my 'words behind thee.'——When he has read this text, I would have him ſit down (as *Origen* did)

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did*) and expound and apply it by his tears; then make a free confeſſion of his guilt before the aſſembly, and deſire their prayers to God for pardoning and renewing grace; that hereafter, he may preach a Chriſt whom he knows, may feel what he ſpeaks, and may commend the riches of the goſpel by experience.

II. Take heed to yourſelves, that you be not deſtitute of the neceſſary qualifications for your work.

And oh! what qualifications are requiſite for a man that hath ſuch a charge as ours! He muſt not be a babe in knowledge that will teach men all thoſe things which are neceſſary to ſalvation. How many difficulties in divinity are there to be opened; yea, about the very fundamentals of religion! How many obſcure texts to be expounded! How many duties to be done, wherein ourſelves and others may miſcarry, if in the matter, the end, the manner, and circumſtances of them, they be not well informed! How many ſins, and ſubtle temptations muſt we direct our people to avoid! How many weighty, and yet intricate, caſes of conſcience have we frequently to reſolve! How many ſtrong

* This refers to his being compelled to offer incenſe to an Idol, for which he was excommunicated by the Church. See *Clark's Lives of the Fathers.* ED.

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holds have we to beat down! What ſubtle, diligent, and obſtinate reſiſtance muſt we expect from thoſe we have to deal with! We cannot make a breach in their groundleſs hopes and carnal peace, but they have twenty ſhifts and ſeeming reaſons to make it up again; and as many enemies, under the appearance of friends, that are ready to help them. We diſpute not with them upon equal terms; but we have children to reaſon with, who cannot underſtand us. We have wilful, unreaſonable, diſtracted men to deal with; who when they are ſilenced, are not at all the more convinced; but when they can give you no reaſon, will give you their reſolution. We have multitudes of raging paſſions and contradicting enemies to diſpute againſt at once; ſo that whenever we go about the converſion of a ſinner, it is as if we were to diſpute in a noiſy crowd.

Dear brethren! what men ſhould we be in ſkill, reſolution, and unwearied diligence, who have ſo much to do, [and ſo much to hinder us in doing it!] Did *Paul* cry out, 'Who is ſufficient for 'theſe things?' And ſhall WE be careleſs or lazy, as if we were ſufficient? 'What manner of per-'ſons ought we to be' not only 'in all holy con-'verſation and godlineſs,' but in all knowledge, reſolution, and diligence!

To preach a ſermon, I think, is not the hardeſt part of our work. And yet what ſkill is neceſſary to

to make plain the truth; to convince the hearers; to let irresistible light into their consciences, and keep it there; to drive the truth into their minds, and answer every objection that oppose it; and at the same time, to do all this with regard to the language and manner, so as best becomes our work; as is most suitable to the capacities of our hearers; and so as to honour that great God, whose message we deliver, by our delivery of it!

It is a lamentable case, that, in a message from the God of heaven, of everlasting consequence to the souls of men, we should behave ourselves so, as that the whole business should miscarry in our hands: that God should be dishonoured; his work disgraced; and sinners rather hardened than converted, through our weakness or neglect. How often have carnal hearers gone jeering home, at the palpable and dishonourable failings of the preacher! How many sleep under us, because our hearts and tongues are sleepy, and we bring not with us skill and zeal enough to awaken them!—Brethren, do you not shrink and tremble under a sense of the greatness of your work? Will a common measure of ability and prudence serve for such a task as yours?—Necessity may indeed cause the church to tolerate the weak; but woe to us if we tolerate and indulge our own weakness.

Do not reason and conscience tell you, that if you dare venture on so high a work as this, you should spare no pains to be fit for the performance of

of it? It is not now and then an idle taſte of ſtudies, that will ſerve to make an able divine. I know that lazineſs has learned to argue, from the inſufficiency of all our ſtudies, that the SPIRIT muſt wholly and alone qualify us for, and aſſiſt us in our work. But can we reaſonably think that God, having commanded us to uſe the means, would warrant us to neglect them? Will he cauſe us to thrive in a courſe of idleneſs? Or bring us to knowledge by dreams? Or take us up to heaven and ſhew us his counſels, while we are unconcerned about the matter? Strange! that men ſhould dare, by their ſinful lazineſs, thus to quench the ſpirit! God has required us that we 'be not ſlothful in 'buſineſs, but fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord.' Therefore, brethren, loſe no time: ſtudy, pray, diſcourſe, and practiſe; that by theſe means your abilities may be increaſed.

Beſides the compoſition of ſermons, how many other things ſhould a miniſter underſtand! What a great defect would it be to be ignorant of them; and how much ſhall we miſs ſuch knowledge in our work! In order to gain a competent meaſure of knowledge, a variety of books muſt be read, [and well digeſted.] Experience will teach you, that men are not to be made learned or wiſe, without hard ſtudy and unwearied diligence. Shall we then be indolent? Will neither the natural deſire of knowing, nor the ſpiritual deſire of knowing

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ing God and things divine, nor the conſciouſneſs of our ignorance and weakneſs, nor a ſenſe of the importance of our miniſterial work, keep us cloſe to our ſtudies, and make us diligent in ſeeking after truth?

We ſhould the rather take heed to our qualifications, becauſe ſuch works as ours put men more upon the uſe and trial of their graces, than thoſe of other perſons. Weak gifts and graces may carry a man through an even and laudable courſe of life, who is not exerciſed with any great trials. Small ſtrength may ſerve for eaſier works, and lighter burdens: but if you will venture on the great undertakings of the Miniſtry; if you will engage againſt 'principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſſes', in order to reſcue captive ſinners from the dominion of Satan, and lead on the troops of Chriſt in the face of all their enemies, common abilities will not be ſufficient. The tempter will make his firſt and ſharpeſt onſet on YOU. He bears you the greateſt malice, who are engaged to do him the greateſt miſchief. He has found, by experience, that to 'ſmite the ſhepherd,' is the moſt effectual means to 'ſcatter the flock.' You therefore ſhall have his moſt ſubtile inſinuations, inceſſant ſolicitations, and violent aſſaults. So that you muſt expect to come off with greater ſhame and deeper wounds, than if you had lived a common life, if you think to go through

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through ſuch things as theſe with a careleſs ſoul. We have ſeen many perſons that lived a private life, in good reputation for parts and piety, who, when they have taken upon them either the magiſtracy, or military employment, where the work was ſuperior to their abilities, have met with ſcandal and diſgrace. So alſo have we ſeen ſome private chriſtians of good eſteem, who having thought too highly of their abilities, and thruſt themſelves into the miniſterial office, have proved weak and empty men, and have become ſome of the greateſt burdens to the church. They might, perhaps, have done God more ſervice, had they continued in the higher rank of private men, than they did among the loweſt of the miniſtry. If then you will venture into the midſt of dangers, and bear the burden of the day, 'take heed to yourſelves.'

This care and diligence is now the more requiſite for miniſters, becauſe the neceſſity of the church forces ſo many from our places of education ſo very young, that they are obliged to teach and learn together. It were very deſirable that the church ſhould wait longer for their preparation, if it were poſſible; but I would by no means diſcourage ſuch young perſons as are drawn out by mere neceſſity, if they are but competently qualified, and quickened with earneſt deſires of men's ſalvation, to cloſe ſtudy, and great diligence in their work.——And this is neceſſary; for if the people take

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take them to be ignorant, they will despise their teaching, and think themselves as wise as they. The lowest degree tolerable in a minister, is to be *supra vulgus fidelium*. It will produce some degree of reverence, when your people know that you are wiser than themselves.

If you are conscious that you are none of the most able ministers, and despair of being reverenced for your talents, you have the more need to study and labour for their increase. That which you want in natural ability, you must make up in other qualifications; and then you may be as successful as other persons.

III. Take heed to yourselves, that your ENDS in undertaking and discharging the ministerial office are good and honourable.

The ultimate end of our pastoral oversight, is that which is the ultimate end of our whole lives: viz. to please and glorify God. With this is connected the honour of Christ, the welfare of the church, and the salvation of our people: their sanctification and holy obedience; their unity, order, beauty, strength, preservation, and increase.

The whole ministerial work must be managed purely for God, and the good of souls, without any private ends of our own. This is our sincerity in it. None but the upright make GOD their end, or do all or any thing heartily, for his honour.

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As for other perſons, they chooſe the miniſtry rather than any other calling, either becauſe their parents devoted them to it; or becauſe it is a pleaſant thing to know; and this is a life wherein they have the moſt opportunity to furniſh their intellects with all kinds of ſcience; or becauſe it is not ſo fatiguing to the body, (loving to favour the fleſh) or becauſe it is accompanied with ſome degree of reverence from men; and they eſteem it an honourable thing to be leaders and teachers; to have others depend on them, and 'receive the 'law at their mouth;' or becauſe it affords them a comfortable maintenance. For ſuch ends as theſe do many undertake the miniſtry; and were it not for ſome or other of theſe, they would ſoon give it over.

Now can it be expected that God ſhould greatly bleſs the ſervices of ſuch men; ſince it is not for him that they preach, but for themſelves; their own eaſe or advantage? No wonder if he leave them to themſelves for the ſucceſs. A wrong END ſpoils all our work with regard to ourſelves, how good ſoever it may in itſelf be. They that undertake this as a common work, to make a trade of it, in order to their ſubſiſtence in the world, will find that they have choſen a bad trade, though it be a good employment. Self-denial is of abſolute neceſſity in every chriſtian; but of double neceſſity in a Miniſter, as he hath a double ſanctification or dedication

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dedication to God; and without ſelf-denial he cannot faithfully do God any ſervice. Hard ſtudies, much knowledge, and excellent preaching, if the end be not right, are but more glorious, hypocritical ſinning.

IV. Take heed to yourſelves, leſt you fall into thoſe ſins you preach againſt, and leſt, by your example, you contradict your doctrine.

Will you make it your buſineſs to magnify God, and when you have done, diſhonour him as much as others? Will you proclaim Chriſt's governing power, and yet rebel againſt it? Will you preach his laws, and then wilfully break them?——If ſin be evil, why do you commit it? If it be not, why do you diſſuade men from it? If God's threatenings are true, why do you not fear them? If they are falſe, why do you needleſsly trouble men with them? 'Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou 'not thyſelf? Thou that makeſt thy boaſt of 'the law, through breaking the law, diſhonoureſt 'thou God?' It is a palpable error in thoſe miniſters, who make ſuch a diſproportion between their preaching and their living, that they will ſtudy hard to *preach* accurately, and ſtudy little or not at all to *live* accurately. They are loth to miſplace a word in their ſermons, but they make nothing of miſplacing their affections, words, or actions in the courſe of their lives. They are ſo nice in their compoſitions, that they ſeem to look upon

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upon it as a virtue in them to preach ſeldom, that their language may be the more polite; and all the rhetorical writers they can meet with are preſſed to ſerve them for the adorning their ſtyle; but when it comes to matter of practice, how little do they regard what they ſaid? What a difference is there between their pulpit-ſpeeches and their familiar diſcourſe! They that are moſt impatient of barbariſms and ſoleciſms in a ſermon, can too eaſily tolerate them in their converſation. —— Surely, brethren, we have great cauſe to take heed what we *do*, as well as what we *ſay*. A practical doctrine muſt be practically preached. We muſt ſtudy as hard how to live well, as how to preach well. If the ſaving of ſouls be your end, you will certainly attend to it out of the pulpit, as well as in it; you will LIVE for it, and contribute all your endeavours to attain it. If you intend the end of the miniſtry only in the pulpit, it ſeems you take yourſelves for miniſters no longer than you are there: and if ſo, I think you are unworthy to be eſteemed ſuch at all.—You have very great need of the ſtricteſt care over your conduct; for

1. You have the ſame depraved nature and ſinful inclinations as others. There are, in the beſt of us, the remnants of pride, unbelief, ſelf-ſeeking, hypocriſy, and other ſins. How ſmall a matter may caſt us down, by enticing us to folly, enkindling our paſſions, perverting our judgments, abating

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abating our reſolution, and cooling our zeal! Without great care, our treacherous hearts may ſome time or another deceive us; and thoſe ſins that ſeem to lie dead, may revive.

2. Remember too, that as you have the ſame evil diſpoſitions as other perſons, you are expoſed to temptations peculiar to yourſelves; particularly (as has been already obſerved) from the great enemy of ſouls; who obtains a very great conqueſt, if he can make a miniſter unfaithful, and tempt him into ſin. Do not gratify your grand adverſary, nor give him an occaſion to inſult and triumph.

3. Many eyes are upon you, and therefore many will obſerve your falls. The eclipſes of the ſun by day-time, are ſeldom without many witneſſes. If other men may ſin without great obſervation, YOU cannot. While you are 'as lights 'ſet upon an hill, you cannot be hid.' The light of your doctrine will expoſe your evil doings. Live therefore as thoſe who remember that the world looks on you with the quick ſighted eye of malice, ready to find the ſmalleſt fault; to aggravate and divulge it; yea, to make faults where there are none.

4. Take heed to your conduct, becauſe your ſins are attended with more heinous aggravations than thoſe of other men. It was a ſaying of king Alphonſus, "that a great man cannot commit a "ſmall

" ſmall ſin." We may with more propriety ſay, that a *learned* man, and a *teacher* of others, cannot: or at leaſt, that *that* ſin is great when committed by him, which would be eſteemed ſmaller in another perſon.—Your ſins are committed againſt greater knowledge than the ſins of moſt others can be. They diſcover greater hypocriſy, and carry in them greater treachery. You are laid under more ſolemn obligations to abſtain from them than other men, and you enjoy ſuperior advantages for ſo doing.

5. Take heed of falling into ſin, becauſe the honour of your Lord and Maſter is concerned. As you may do him more ſervice, ſo you may do him more diſſervice than others. The nearer men ſtand to God, the greater diſhonour does he receive from their miſcarriages. A heavy judgment was threatened and executed on *Eli* and his houſe, becauſe they 'kicked at his ſacrifice and offering;' and we are told, 'the ſin of the young men was 'great before the Lord,' becauſe on account of their prophane behaviour, 'men abhorred the 'offering of the Lord.' The aggravation of their ſin was, that it 'cauſed the enemies of the Lord 'to blaſpheme;' which circumſtance provoked God to deal more ſharply with *David*, with reſpect to his crime, than otherwiſe he would have done. Never give ſinners occaſion to ſay, " there goes a " covetous, or a drunken prieſt:" or to reflect, when

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when they ſee you, that "notwithſtanding all "your talk, you are as bad as they." 'Offences 'will come: but woe to the man by whom they 'come.' You 'bear the ark of the Lord;' you are intruſted with his honour; and dare you let it fall? Take heed, in the name of God, of every word you ſpeak, and of every ſtep you take. God will indeed wipe off all the diſhonour that may be caſt upon him; but you will not ſo eaſily remove the ſhame and ſorrow from yourſelves. Once more

6. Take heed to your conduct, becauſe the ſucceſs of all your labours does very much depend upon it. If you unſay by your lives, what you ſay with your lips, you will prove the greateſt hinderers of your own work. It greatly prevents our ſucceſs, that other men are all the week contradicting to the people in private, what we have been ſpeaking to them from the word of God, in public; but it will prevent it much more, if we contradict it ourſelves; if our actions give our words the lie. This is the way to make men think that the word of God is but an idle tale. Surely he that means as he ſpeaks, will DO as he ſpeaks. One improper word, one unbecoming action, may blaſt the fruit of many a ſermon.

Say, brethren, in the fear of God, do you regard the ſucceſs of your labours, and wiſh to ſee it upon the ſouls of your hearers, or do you not? If you do

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do not, why do you ſtudy and preach, and call yourſelves the miniſters of Chriſt? If you DO, ſurely you cannot eaſily be induced to ſpoil your own work. You do not much regard the ſucceſs of it, if you are willing to ſell it at ſo cheap a rate, as for the indulgence of any ſin. Long enough may you liſt up your voices againſt ſin, before men will believe there is any ſuch harm in it, or ſuch danger attending it as you talk of, if they ſee you commit it yourſelves. While men have eyes as well as ears, they will think they *ſee* your meaning as well as *hear* it; and they are much more ready to believe what they ſee than what they hear. All that a preacher does is a kind of preaching. When you live a covetous or careleſs life; when you drink or game, or waſte your time, &c. by your practice you preach theſe ſins to your people. They will give you leave to ſpeak againſt theſe things in the pulpit as much as you will, if you will but let them alone afterwards, and talk and live as they do; for they take the pulpit to be but as a ſtage; a place where preachers muſt ſhew themſelves and play their parts; where you have liberty for an hour to ſay what you pleaſe. They will not much regard it, if you do not ſhew, by your conduct amongſt them, that you meant as you ſaid.

Conſider further, ſince the ſucceſs of your labours depends on the grace and bleſſing of God, whether

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whether you will not by your ſins, provoke him to forſake you, and blaſt your endeavours; at leaſt with regard to yourſelves, though he may in ſome meaſure bleſs them to his people. Once more,

V. Take heed to yourſelves, that your graces be maintained in life and in action.

For this end, preach to YOURSELVES the ſermons you ſtudy, before you preach them to others. If you were to do this for your own ſakes, it would be no loſt labour. But I principally recommend it on the public account, and for the ſake of the church. When your minds are in a holy frame, your people are likely to partake of it. Your prayers and praiſes and doctrine will be ſweet and heavenly to them. They are likely to feel it when you have been much with God. That which is on your hearts moſt, will be moſt in their ears. I confeſs, I muſt ſpeak it by lamentable experience, that I publiſh to my flock the diſtempers of my ſoul. When I let my heart grow cold, my preaching is cold; and when it is confuſed, my preaching is confuſed alſo. And I have often obſerved, in the beſt of my hearers, that when I have grown cold in preaching, they have grown cold accordingly. The next prayers I have heard from them, have been too much like my ſermons. You cannot decline and neglect your duties, but others will be

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loſers by it as well as yourſelves. If we let our love decreaſe, and if we abate our holy care and watchfulneſs, it will ſoon appear in our doctrine. If the matter ſhew it not, the manner will; and our hearers are likely to fare the worſe for it. Whereas, if we could abound in faith and love and zeal, how would they overflow to the refreſhing of our congregations! and how would this appear by increaſing the ſame graces in our people! Watch therefore, brethren, over your own hearts. Keep out luſts, and worldly inclinations; and keep up the life of faith and love. Be much at home, and be much with God. If it be not your daily ſerious buſineſs to ſtudy your own hearts, to ſubdue corruptions, and to walk with God, all will go amiſs with you, and you will ſtarve your audience. Or if you have an affected fervency, you cannot expect any great bleſſing to attend it.——Above all, be much in ſecret prayer and meditation. There you muſt fetch the heavenly fire, that muſt kindle your ſacrifices.

But beſides this general courſe of watchfulneſs for ourſelves and others, methinks a miniſter ſhould take ſome ſpecial pains with his own heart, juſt before he goes to the congregation. If it be cold THEN, how is he likely to warm the hearts of his hearers? Go then to God, eſpecially, for life. Read ſome rouſing awakening book; or meditate on

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on the vaſt importance of the ſubject on which you are to ſpeak; and on the great neceſſity of your peoples ſouls; that thus you may go in 'the zeal 'of the Lord, into his houſe *.'

* With a view to the object above recommended by Mr. Baxter, Dr. Doddridge frequently read a paſſage from this work of his, on the Lord's day morning previous to his going out to preach; and ſome other miniſters have experienced the utility of doing the ſame.

THE END OF THE FIRST PART.

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PART THE SECOND.

Of the Duty of ſtated Miniſters with reſpect to their PEOPLE.

HAVING ſhewed you, as it was firſt neceſſary, what we muſt be, and what we muſt do for our own ſouls, I proceed to the

SECOND branch of the exhortation: 'Take 'heed unto all the FLOCK over which the Holy 'Ghoſt hath made you overſeers, to feed the church 'of God.'

Here it is neceſſarily ſuppoſed, That every flock ſhould have their own paſtor, and every paſtor his own flock. It is the will of God, that chriſtians ſhould 'know their teachers that labour among 'them, and are over them in the Lord.' *Paul* and *Barnabas* 'ordained elders in every church.' Though a miniſter be an officer in the univerſal church, yet he is in an eſpecial manner the OVERSEER of that particular church which is committed to his care. When we are ordained miniſters, without

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without a ſpecial charge, we are licenced and commanded to do our beſt for all, where we are called to exerciſe; but when we have undertaken a particular charge, we have reſtrained the exerciſe of our gifts and guidance eſpecially to that: ſo that we ſhould allow others no more of our time and help than our own flock can ſpare. From this relation of paſtor and flock, ariſe thoſe duties which we mutually owe each other.

It is further implied, that our flocks ſhould be no larger than we are capable of overſeeing, or taking the care of. The nature of the paſtoral work is ſuch as requires it to be done by the paſtor himſelf.

By the *flock* or *church* is meant that particular ſociety of chriſtians of which a biſhop or elder has the charge; aſſociated for perſonal communion in God's public worſhip, and for other mutual aſſiſtance in the way to ſalvation. The word ποιμνιον properly ſignifies *a little flock*.

What is meant when we are exhorted ποιμανειν την εκκλησιαν ſeems to be, not only to *feed* the church, as it is tranſlated; nor merely to *rule* it, as ſome underſtand it; but to perform every branch of the paſtoral overſight. In a word, it is *paſtorem agere*; to do the work of a Paſtor or Shepherd to the flock: The ſeveral branches of which ſhall now be conſidered.

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CHAP. I.

Of a Minister's stated public Work: Preaching; Prayer; and administering the Sacraments.

ONE of the most important and most excellent parts of our work is

I. The public PREACHING of the Word. [Here we shall suggest a few thoughts on the design of preaching—the manner of it—the pronunciation—and the composition of sermons.]

1. Of the Design of Preaching.

The grand design of preaching is, to shew men their truest happiness, and to direct them how to attain it.—It is the great work of christian ministers to acquaint men with God, and that glory which all his chosen people shall enjoy in his presence; to shew them the certainty and excellence of the promised felicity in the life to come, compared with the vanities of the present world, that so we may turn the stream of their thoughts and affections; bring them to a due contempt of this world, and put them upon seeking that durable treasure. This is the work about which we are to treat with men, day after day; for could we once bring them to propose a right END, and set their hearts unfeignedly

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edly on God and heaven, the greateſt part of our buſineſs would be done.

Having ſhewn them the right end, our next work is to acquaint them with the right means of attaining it. We muſt firſt teach them the evil and danger of ſin; then we muſt open to them the great myſteries of redemption;—the perſon, natures, incarnation, life, ſufferings, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, interceſſion, and dominion of the bleſſed Son of God. As alſo, the conditions impoſed on us; the duties he has commanded us; the everlaſting torments he has threatened to the finally impenitent; the rich treaſury of his bleſſings and grace; the tenour of his promiſes, and all the privileges of the ſaints. We muſt recommend to them a life of holineſs and communion with God. We muſt excite them to, and direct them in, the performance of all the ſpiritual duties which the goſpel requires. At the ſame time we muſt diſcover to them the deceitfulneſs of their own hearts; the many difficulties and dangers they will meet with; eſpecially we muſt ſhew them the depth of Satan's temptations, and aſſiſt them againſt all theſe. We muſt reveal and recommend to them the great and gracious deſigns of God, in his works of creation, providence, redemption, juſtification, adoption, ſanctification, and glorification. In a word, we muſt teach them as much as we can, of the whole works and word of God. And what

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two volumes are here for a minister to preach upon! How great, how excellent, how wonderful! All christians are the disciples or scholars of Christ: the church is his school: we are his ushers; the Bible is his grammar: this it is we must be daily teaching them. The *Papists* would teach them without book, lest they should learn *heresies* from *the word of truth;* but our business is not to teach them without book, but to help them to understand this book of God.

2. Of the Manner of Preaching.

Preaching is a work which requires greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal, than any of us commonly bring to it. It is no trifling matter to stand up in the face of a congregation, and deliver a message of salvation or damnation, as from the living God, in the name of the Redeemer. It is no easy thing to speak so plainly that the most ignorant may understand us; so seriously that the deadest heart may feel, and so convincingly that contradicting cavillers may be silenced.—Certainly, if our hearts were set upon the work of the Lord as they ought to be, it would be done more vigorously than by the most of us it is. Alas! how few ministers preach with all their might, or speak about everlasting joys and torments in such a manner as may make men believe that they are in earnest! It would make a man's heart ache to see a number of dead and

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and drowſy ſinners ſit under a miniſter, without having a word that is likely to quicken or awaken them. The blow often falls ſo light, that hard-hearted perſons cannot feel. Few miniſters will ſo much as exert their voice and ſtir themſelves up to an earneſt delivery. Or if they ſpeak loud and earneſtly, oftentimes they do not anſwer it with earneſtneſs of matter; and then the voice does but little good. The people will eſteem it but mere bawling if the matter does not correſpond. On the other hand, it would grieve one to hear what excellent ſubjects ſome miniſters treat upon, who yet let them die in their hands for want of a cloſe and lively application; what fit matter they have for convincing ſinners, and yet how little they make of it.

O ſirs! how plain, how cloſe, how ſerious ſhould we be in delivering a meſſage of ſuch importance as ours, when the everlaſting life or death of men are concerned in it! Methinks we are no where ſo much wanting, as in ſerioufneſs; yet nothing is more unſuitable to our buſineſs, than to be ſlight and dull. What! ſpeak coldly for God, and for the ſalvation of men? Can we believe that our people muſt be converted or condemned, and yet can we ſpeak to them in a drowſy tone? In the name of God, brethren, awaken your hearts before you come into the pulpit; that when you are there you may be fit to waken the

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hearts of ſinners. Remember, that they muſt be awakened, or damned: but ſurely a ſleepy preacher is not likely to awaken them. Though you give the holy things of God the higheſt praiſes in words, if you do it coldly, you will unſay by your manner all that you have ſaid. It is a kind of contempt of great things, eſpecially ſo great as theſe, to ſpeak of them without great affection and fervency. 'Whatſoever our hand findeth to do, (certainly then in ſuch a work as preaching for men's ſalvation) we ſhould 'do it with all our 'might.' Though I do not recommend a conſtant loudneſs in your delivery, (for that will make your fervency contemptible) yet ſee to it, that you have a conſtant ſerioufneſs; and when the matter requires it (as it ſhould do in the application, at leaſt) then 'lift up your voice and ſpare not' your ſpirits. Speak to your hearers as to men that muſt be awakened either here or in hell. Look upon your congregation with ſerioufneſs and compaſſion; and think in what a ſtate of joy or torment they muſt be for ever; and that ſurely will make you earneſt, and melt your hearts for them. Whatever you do, let the people ſee that you are in good earneſt. You cannot ſoften men's hearts by jeſting with them, or telling them a ſmooth tale, or patching up a gawdy oration. They will not caſt away their deareſt pleaſures, at the drowſy requeſt of one who ſeems not to mean as he ſpeaks,

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ſpeaks, or to care much whether his requeſt be granted or not.

Let us then rouſe up ourſelves to the work of the Lord. Let us ſpeak to our people as for their lives, and 'ſave them as by violence, pulling them 'out of the fire.' Satan will not be charmed out of his poſſeſſions; we muſt lay ſiege to the ſouls of ſinners, which are his chief garriſon; muſt play the battery of God's ordnance againſt it, and play it cloſe, till a breach is made; not ſuffering them to make it up again. As we have reaſonable creatures to deal with, we muſt ſee to it that our ſermons be all convincing; and that we make the light of ſcripture and reaſon ſhine ſo bright in the faces of the ungodly, that unleſs they wilfully ſhut their eyes, it may even force them to ſee. A ſermon full of mere words, while it wants the light of evidence, and the zeal of life, is but an image, or a well-dreſſed carcaſe. In preaching, there is intended a communion of ſouls between us and our people; or a communication of ſomewhat from ours to theirs. We muſt endeavour to communicate the fulleſt light of evidence, from our underſtandings to theirs; and to warm their hearts, by enkindling in them holy affections from our own. The great things which we are to commend to our hearers, have reaſon enough on their ſide, and lie plain before them in the word of God. We ſhould therefore be ſo furniſhed with a proper ſtore of

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evidence, as to come as with a torrent upon their underſtandings, and bear down all before us. With our dilemmas and expoſtulations, we ſhould endeavour to bring them to a nonplus, that they may be forced to yield to the power of truth; to ſee that it is great and will prevail.

3. Of the Pronunciation.

A great matter with moſt of our hearers, lies in the pronunciation and tone of the voice. The beſt matter will not move them unleſs it be movingly delivered. When a man has a reading or declaiming tone, and ſpeaks like a ſchool-boy ſaying a leſſon, or pronouncing an oration, few are much affected with any thing that he ſays. The want of a familiar tone and expreſſion, is as great a defect in the delivery of moſt of us, as any thing whatever: in this reſpect therefore we ſhould be careful to amend. Let us guard againſt all affectation, and ſpeak as familiarly to our people as if we were ſpeaking to any of them perſonally.

4. Of the Compoſition of Sermons.

In the ſtudy of our ſermons we are apt to be too negligent; gathering only a few naked heads, and not conſidering of the moſt forcible expreſſions to ſet them home to men's hearts. We muſt ſtudy how to convince and get within men, and how to bring each truth to the quick; not leaving all this to

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to our *extempore* promptitude, unleſs it be in caſes of neceſſity *.

Next to preaching, another very important part of our public work is,

II. To guide our people, and be their mouth to God in the PRAYERS and PRAISES of the church; as alſo to bleſs them in the name of the Lord.

This ſacerdotal part of our office is not the leaſt; nor ought it to be thruſt into a corner, as it too frequently is. A very conſiderable part of God's public ſervice, was wont in all ages of the church, till of late, to conſiſt in praiſes and euchariſtical acts of communion. The Lord's day was kept as a day of thankſgiving, in the hymns, and common rejoicings of the faithful; in ſpecial commemoration of the work of redemption, and the happy condition of the goſpel church. Though I am as apprehenſive of the neceſſity of preaching as moſt perſons, yet I think it ought not to prevent our ſolemn prayers to, and praiſes of God, from employing more of the Lord's day than they generally

* Mr. Baxter was uſed in general to write his ſermons at length, as moſt of our old divines did. In ſome place in his writings, he acknowledges and laments it, when he neglected this, as the effect of indolence, and as productive of unhappy conſequences. Some excellent directions for the compoſition of ſermons may be ſeen in *Doddridge's Preaching Lectures.*

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do. Our worſhip ſhould be as evangelical as our doctrine. [Now as it is our buſineſs to lead the devotions of our people on ſuch ſolemn occaſions, we ought to take heed that we do it with ſuch propriety and fervour as will be conducive to their real edification.] *

Another part of our paſtoral work is

III. The adminiſtration of the ſacred myſteries, or the ſeals of God's covenant, BAPTISM, and the LORD'S SUPPER.

Some miniſters totally neglect theſe ordinances; others adminiſter them in a very careleſs manner; and a third ſort lay a very undue ſtreſs on trifling circumſtances relating to them, and make them a matter of much contention, even in that ordinance, in which union and communion are ſo much profeſſed. [We not only ought carefully to avoid all

* It is much to be wiſhed that Mr. Baxter had enlarged a little on the ſubject of PUBLIC PRAYER; which, though a part of divine worſhip of peculiar importance, is often worſe performed than any other. See ſome too juſt complaints on this head in the *Evang. Mag* for *June* 1807. Mr. Baxter greatly excelled in prayer; of which one evidence appears in his *Reformed Liturgy*, and in the forms which he drew up for families. Theſe are introduced in *A Collection of Family Prayers*, and they are ſome of the beſt in the volume, from which young miniſters might derive much aſſiſtance.

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theſe faults, but take peculiar pains in the adminiſtration of theſe ordinances, for the edification of the church *.]

CHAP. II.

Of perſonal Inſpection and private Inſtruction.

WE are commanded to 'take heed to ALL 'the flock;' that is, doubtleſs, to every individual member of it. To which end, it is neceſſarily ſuppoſed that we ſhould know every perſon that belongs to our charge; for how can we take heed to them if we do not know them? We muſt labour to be acquainted, as fully as we can, not only with the perſons, but with the ſtate of all our people,—their inclinations, and converſations; what are the ſins they are moſt in danger of; what duties they neglect, both with reſpect to the matter and the manner; and to what temptations they are peculiarly liable. If we know not the temperament or diſeaſe, we are likely to prove unſucceſsful phyſicians.

* See on this head *Doddridge*'s Lectures—*Maſon*'s Student and Paſtor—and *Orton*'s Letters to Diſſenting Miniſters.

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Being thus acquainted with all the flock, we muſt do the work of a paſtor towards every individual. And one would imagine, that all reaſonable men would be ſo well ſatisfied in regard to this, that nothing need be ſaid to recommend it. Does not a careful ſhepherd look after every individual ſheep, and a good phyſician attend every particular patient? Why then ſhould not the ſhepherds and the phyſicians of the church take heed to every individual member of their charge? Chriſt himſelf, the great and 'good ſhepherd,' who has the whole flock to look after, takes care of every individual; like him whom he deſcribes in his parable, who 'left the ninety-nine ſheep in the wilderneſs, to 'ſeek after one that was loſt.'——PAUL 'taught 'the people publicly, and from houſe to houſe.' He 'warned every man, and taught every man, 'that he might preſent every man perfect in 'Chriſt Jeſus.' We are to 'watch for ſouls as 'thoſe that muſt give an account' how we have done it. *Heb.* xiii. 17.

To theſe and a variety of other ſcriptures, which might be quoted to our preſent purpoſe, I might add many paſſages from the ancient councils, from whence it appears that ſuch a perſonal inſpection was the practice of the moſt ancient times. I ſhall only mention one from *Ignatius*: "Let "aſſemblies be often gathered; ſeek after (or "inquire

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" inquire of) all by name; deſpiſe not ſervant-
" men or maids." *Ignat. ad Polyc.*

To mention a few particulars:

1. We ſhould uſe all the means we can to inſtruct the ignorant in the matters of their ſalvation.

We ſhould uſe our own moſt plain, familiar words in diſcourſing with them, and ſhould give or lend them ſuch books as are fit for them. We ſhould perſuade them to learn catechiſms; and direct ſuch as cannot read, to get help of their neighbours, whom we ſhould exhort to give them their aſſiſtance; eſpecially ſuch as have the beſt opportunities for it.

2. We ſhould be ready to give advice to ſuch as come to us with caſes of conſcience; eſpecially that great caſe which the Jews put to Peter, and the jailer to Paul and Silas, 'What muſt we do 'to be ſaved?'

A miniſter is not only to be employed in public preaching to his people, but ſhould be a known counſellor for their ſouls, as the lawyer is for their eſtates, and the phyſician for their bodies. Not that a miniſter (any more than a phyſician, or lawyer) ſhould be troubled with every trifling matter about which others can adviſe them as well. But every man that is in doubts and difficulties about matters of importance, ſhould bring his caſe to

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to his minister for resolution. Thus Nicodemus came to Christ, as it was usual with the people to go to 'the priest, whose lips were to preserve 'knowledge, and at whose mouth they were to 'ask the law, because he was the messenger of the 'Lord of Hosts.' *Mal.* ii. 7.——Since the people are grown too much unacquainted with the office of the ministry, and their own duty herein, it belongs to us to acquaint them with it, and to press them publickly to come to us for advice in cases of great concernment to their souls. What abundance of good might we do, could we but bring them to this. But how few are there who heartily press their people to it! A sad case, that men's souls should be injured and hazarded, by the total neglect of so great a duty; and that ministers should scarcely ever tell them of it and awaken them to it! Were they but duly sensible of the need and importance of it, you would have them more frequently knocking at your doors, to open their cases, to make their complaints, and to ask your advice. I beseech you then, put them more upon this; and perform your duty carefully when they seek your help.

To this end it is very necessary, that we should be acquainted with practical cases, and especially with the nature of true grace, so that we may assist them in trying their states, and resolve the main question, which concerns their everlasting life

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life or death. One word of ſeaſonable, prudent advice, given by a miniſter to perſons in neceſſity, has ſometimes done that good which many ſermons have failed of doing.

3. We ſhould have an eſpecial eye upon FAMILIES, to ſee that they be well ordered, and that the duties of each relation be well performed.

The life of religion, and the welfare and glory of church and ſtate, depend much upon family government and duty. If we ſuffer the neglect of this, we undo all. What are WE likely to do towards the reforming a congregation, if all the work be caſt upon us alone, and maſters of families neglect that neceſſary duty of theirs, by which they are obliged to help us? If any good be begun by the miniſtry in any ſoul, a careleſs, prayerleſs, worldly family is likely to ſtifle, or very much hinder it. Whereas if you could but get the rulers of families to do their part; to take up the work where you left it, what abundance of good might be done by it! Do all that you can therefore to promote this buſineſs, if ever you deſire the true reformation and welfare of your pariſhes.

To this end, get information how every family is conducted, and how God is worſhipped in it, that you may know how to proceed. Go now and then among them, when they are moſt at leiſure, and aſk the maſter of the family whether he prays with

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with them and reads the ſcripture. Labour to convince ſuch as neglect this, of their ſin. Pray with them before you go, to give them an example how you would have them pray, and get them to promiſe that they will be more conſcientious therein for the future.—If you find any unable to pray in tolerable expreſſions, through ignorance or diſuſe, perſuade them to ſtudy their wants, and get their hearts affected with them. Adviſe them frequently to viſit thoſe neighbours who uſe to pray, that they may learn; and in the mean time recommend it to them to uſe a Form of prayer, rather than omit the duty. It is neceſſary to moſt illiterate people who have not been brought up where prayer has been uſed, to begin with a Form; becauſe otherwiſe they would be able to do nothing. From a ſenſe of their inability, they will wholly neglect the duty, though they deſire to per-Form it. Many perſons can utter ſome honeſt requeſts in ſecret, who will not be able to ſpeak tolerable ſenſe before others; and I will not be one of them who had rather the duty were wholly neglected, or prophaned and made contemptible, than encourage them to uſe a Form, either recited by memory, or read.—Tell them however, that it is their ſin and ſhame to be ſo unacquainted with their own neceſſities, as not to know how to ſpeak to God in prayer, when every beggar can find words to aſk an alms; and that this Form is only

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to be uſed, till they can do without it; which they ought to endeavour after, that their expreſſions may be varied according to their neceſſities and obſervations.

See that beſides the Bible, they have ſome profitable moving books in every family. If they have none, perſuade them to buy ſome of a low price. If they are not able, either give them, or procure for them ſuch as are likely to be of the greateſt uſe to them. Engage them to read in the evening, when they have leiſure, but eſpecially on the Lord's day; and by all means perſuade them to teach their children to read. Particularly, direct them how to ſpend the Sabbath; how to diſpatch their worldly buſineſs, ſo as to prevent encumbrances and diſtractions; and when they have attended public worſhip, how to ſpend their time in their families. The life of religion, among poor people eſpecially, depends much upon this, becauſe they have very little time beſides this to ſpare. If they loſe this, they loſe all, and will remain ignorant and brutiſh.——Perſuade the maſter of the family, every Lord's day evening, to cauſe all his family to repeat ſome catechiſm to him, and give him an account of what they have learned that day in public.—If you find any who cannot ſpend the time profitably at home, adviſe them to take their families to ſome godly neighbour that can.

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If any in the family are known to be unruly, give the maſter a ſpecial charge concerning them, and make him underſtand what a ſin it is to connive at, and tolerate them.—If you can thus get heads of families to perform their duty, they will ſave you much pains with the reſt, and greatly promote the ſucceſs of your labours. You cannot expect a general reformation, till you procure family reformation. Some little obſcure religion there may be, in here and there one; but while it ſticks with ſingle perſons, and is not promoted by theſe ſocieties, it does not proſper, nor promiſe much for future increaſe.

4. Another part of our miniſterial overſight lies in VISITING the SICK, and helping them to prepare for a fruitful life, or a happy death.

Though this be the buſineſs of all our lives and theirs, yet a time of ſickneſs requires extraordinary care both in them and us. When time is almoſt gone, and they muſt be now or never reconciled to God and poſſeſſed of his grace, oh! how does it concern them to redeem their few remaining hours, to 'lay hold on eternal life!' And when we ſee that we ſhall have but a few more days or hours with them, in which to ſpeak to them in reference to their eternal ſtate, what man that is not an Infidel, or to the laſt degree ſtupid, would not be with them, and do all that he can in that ſhort

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ſhort ſpace for their ſalvation! Will it not awaken us to compaſſion, to look upon a languiſhing man, and think that within a few days his ſoul will be in heaven or in hell?—So great is the change made by death, that it ſhould awaken us to the greateſt ſenſibility to ſee a man ſo near it; and it ſhould excite in us the deepeſt pangs of compaſſion, to do the office of inferior angels for the ſoul, before it departs from the fleſh, that it may be ready for the convoy of ſuperior angels, to tranſmit it to the prepared glory. When a man is almoſt at his journey's end, and the next ſtep puts him into heaven or hell, it is time for us to help him, if we can, while there is hope.

As the preſent neceſſity of ſick perſons ſhould induce us to take that opportunity, for their good, ſo ſhould the advantage which ſickneſs and the foreſight of death affordeth for it. There are few of the ſtouteſt hearts but will hear us on their death-beds, though they ſcorned us before. They will then be as tame as lambs, who before were as untractable as mad-men. I find not one in ten of the moſt obſtinate ſcornful wretches in the pariſh, but when they come to die, will humble themſelves, confeſs their faults, ſeem penitent, and promiſe, if they ſhould recover, to reform their lives. With what reſolution will the worſt of them ſeem to caſt away their ſins, exclaim againſt their follies, and the vanities of the world, when they ſee that death

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death is in earneſt with them! I confeſs it is very common for perſons at ſuch a ſeaſon to be frightened into ineffectual purpoſes, but not ſo common to be converted to fixed reſolutions. Yet there are ſome exceptions. That there are ſo *few*, ſhould make both them and us the more diligent in the time of health; and that there are *any*, ſhould beſtir us at laſt, in the uſe of the laſt remedies.

It will not be uſeleſs to *ourſelves* to read ſuch lectures of mortality. Surely it will much try the faith and ſerioufneſs of miniſters or others, to be about dying men. They will have much opportunity to diſcern whether they themſelves are in earneſt about the affairs of the world to come. 'It is better to go to the houſe of mourning, than 'to the houſe of feaſting;' for it tends to make the heart better when we ſee the end of all the living, and what it is that the world will do for thoſe who ſell their ſalvation for it.—It will excite us the better to conſider the uſe of faith and holineſs, which cannot prevent us from dying, any more than others, but which may enable us to die better than they.—To render your viſits to the ſick the more uſeful, take the following directions.

Stay not till their ſtrength and underſtandings be gone, and the time ſo ſhort that you ſcarcely know what to do, but go to them as ſoon as you hear they are ſick, whether they ſend for you or not.—When the time is ſo ſhort, that there is no opportunity

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tunity to attempt the change of their hearts in that distinct and gradual way which is usual with others, we must be sure to dwell upon those truths which are of the greatest importance, and which are the most likely to effect the great work of their conversion.—Shew them the certainty and glory of the life to come; the way in which it was purchased; the great sin and folly of neglecting it in time of health; yet the possibility that remains of obtaining it, if they do but close with it heartily as their happiness, and with the Lord Jesus Christ, as the way thereto; abhorring themselves for their former evil, and unfeignedly resigning up themselves to be justified, sanctified, ruled, and saved by him. Shew them the sufficiency and necessity of the redemption by Jesus Christ, and the fulness of the Spirit, which they may and must be partakers of; the nature and necessity of faith, repentance, and resolutions for new obedience, according as there shall be opportunity. Labour, upon conviction and deliberation, to engage them by solemn promise to Christ, that if their lives are spared, they will yield him such obedience *.

* In Mr. BAXTER's works (Vol. I. p. 511, &c.) there is "A form of exhortation to the godly and the ungodly in their "sickness," containing excellent directions on this head.—Since this was written, the piece referred to has been printed, in a small volume, entitled, *Instruction and Consolation to the Aged, the Sick, and the Dying.* Burditt. Pr. 2*s.*

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If they recover, go to them purpoſely to remind them of their promiſes, that they may reduce them to practice. If, at any time afterward, you ſee them remiſs, go to them again, to put them in mind of what they formerly ſaid. This is often of great uſe to ſuch as recover; it has been the means of converting many a ſoul. It is neceſſary therefore, that you viſit them whoſe ſickneſs is not mortal, as well as them that are dying. You will hereby have ſome advantage to bring them to repentance and newneſs of life, as you will afterwards have this to plead againſt their ſins. When the emperor *Sigiſmund* aſked the biſhop of *Colen* "What was the way to be ſaved?" he anſwered him, "That he muſt be what he pro-"miſed to be, when he was laſt troubled with the "ſtone or the gout."

5. It is the duty of miniſters to reprove and admoniſh ſuch as have been guilty of notorious and ſcandalous ſins.

Before we bring ſuch matters to the congregation, (of which hereafter) it is ordinarily fit for the miniſter to try what he himſelf can do more privately, to bow the ſinner to repentance. A great deal of ſkill is here required, and a difference muſt be made according to the various tempers of the offenders. But with the moſt, it will be neceſſary to fall on with the greateſt plainneſs and power; to ſhake their careleſs hearts, and ſhew them the evil

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evil of ſin; its ſad effects; the unkindneſs, unreaſonableneſs, unprofitableneſs, and other aggravations that attend it; what it is they have done againſt God, and themſelves.

6. We ought to give due encouragement to thoſe humble, upright, obedient chriſtians, who profit by our teaching, and are ornaments to their profeſſion.

We ſhould, in the eyes of all the flock, put ſome difference between them and others, by our more eſpecial familiarity, and other teſtimonies of our approbation of, and rejoicing over them, that ſo we may both encourage them, and excite others to imitate them. God's graces are amiable and honourable in all, even in the pooreſt of the flock. The ſmalleſt degrees muſt be cheriſhed and encouraged; but the higheſt, more openly honoured, and propoſed to imitation. They who ſlight the moſt gracious becauſe they are of the laity, while they claim to themſelves the honour of the clergy, as they ſhew themſelves proud and carnal, take the ready way to debaſe themſelves, and to bring their office into contempt. If there be no honour due to the real ſanctity of a chriſtian, much leſs to the relative ſanctity of a paſtor; nor can he reaſonably expect it ſhould be given him.

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CHAP. III.

Of ſeveral particular caſes and characters, to be regarded both in preaching and private diſcourſe.

WE are next to conſider our miniſterial work (both in public and in private) in reference to the ſeveral qualities of the object.

I. The firſt part of it lies in bringing unſound profeſſors to ſincerity, that they who before were chriſtians in name only, may be ſuch indeed.

Though we be not abſolutely certain that this or that man in particular is unſound and unſanctified, yet as long as we have a certainty that many ſuch attend upon our miniſtrations; and ſince we have a great probability that this is the character of ſome that we can name, we have ground enough to go upon, in treating with them for their converſion.

Alas! the miſery of the unconverted is ſo great, that it calls loudeſt for our compaſſion. They 'are in the gall of bitterneſs, and the bond of 'iniquity.' They have no part or fellowſhip in the pardon of ſin, or the hope of glory. We have therefore a work of great neceſſity to do for them; even to 'open their eyes, to turn them from dark-'neſs unto light; from the power of Satan unto 'God,

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'God, that they may receive the forgiveneſs of 'ſins, and an inheritance among the ſanctified by 'faith in Chriſt;'—to ſoften and open their hearts, to the entertainment of the truth, 'if peradven-'ture God will give them repentance, to the ac-'knowledging of it, that they may eſcape out of 'the ſnare of Satan, who are led captive by him at 'his will.'

It is ſo ſad a caſe to ſee men in a ſtate of damnation, that methinks we ſhould not be able to let them alone, either in public or in private, whatever other work we have to do. I confeſs I am forced frequently to neglect that which would tend to the further increaſe of the godly, and what may be called 'ſtronger meat,' becauſe of the lamentable neceſſity of the unconverted.—Who can talk of controverſies, or nice unneceſſary points, or even truths of a lower degree of neceſſity, however excellent, to gratify certain hearers of higher fancies, (who look for rarities, and expect to have their ears pleaſed) while he ſees a number of ignorant, carnal, miſerable ſinners, before him, who muſt be changed or damned? Methinks I even ſee them entering upon their final woe! Methinks I hear them crying out for the ſpeedieſt help!—If they have not hearts to ſeek or aſk for help themſelves, their *miſery* ſpeaks the louder. As Paul's ſpirit was ſtirred within him, when he ſaw the Athenians ſo addicted to idolatry, methinks it

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ſhould caſt us into one of his paroxyſms, to ſee ſuch numbers of men in the greateſt danger of being everlaſtingly undone. If by faith we did indeed look upon them as within a ſtep of hell, it would more effectually untie our tongues, than *Crœſus*'s danger did the tongue of his ſon. He that will let a ſinner go down to hell for want of ſpeaking to him, has infinitely leſs eſteem for ſouls than the Redeemer of them had; and leſs for his neighbour, than rational charity will allow him to have for the greateſt enemy. Oh! therefore, brethren, whomſoever you neglect, neglect not the moſt miſerable. Whatever you paſs over, forget not poor ſouls, who are under the condemnation and curſe of the law, and who may every hour expect the infernal execution, if a ſpeedy change do not prevent it. Oh! call after the impenitent with the greateſt importunity, and diligently purſue this great work of converting ſouls, whatever elſe you leave undone!

II. The next part of our miniſterial work, is for the building up thoſe who are already converted. And here our work is various, according to the various conditions of ſuch.

1. Many of our flock are young and weak; though of long ſtanding, yet of ſmall proficiency or ſtrength.

Indeed

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Indeed this is the moſt common condition of the godly: moſt of them ſtop at very low degrees of grace; and it is no eaſy thing to get them higher. To bring them to higher and ſtricter *opinions*, is eaſy enough; but to increaſe their knowledge and gifts, is not eaſy; and to increaſe their graces is the hardeſt of all.

A ſtate of weakneſs in grace is of very bad conſequence. It abates conſolation and delight in God, and makes perſons leſs ſerviceable to God and man. They diſhonour the goſpel, they do but little good to any about them, or to themſelves. And as they live to but little profit, they are unwilling, and too unfit, to die. How diligent then ſhould miniſters be to cheriſh and increaſe the graces of God's people! The ſtrength of chriſtians is the honour of the church. When men are inflamed with the love of God; live by a lively operative faith; ſet light by the profits and honours of the world; love one another with a pure heart fervently; can bear, and heartily forgive a wrong; ſuffer joyfully for the cauſe of Chriſt; walk inoffenſively in the world; ſtudy to do good, willing to be the ſervants of all for this end; becoming all things to all men that they may win them; yet abſtaining from the appearance of evil; and ſeaſoning all their actions with a ſweet mixture of prudence, humility, zeal, and heavenly ſpirituality; O what an honour are they to their profeſſion!

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what ornaments to the church! how excellently ſerviceable to God and man! The world would ſooner believe that the goſpel is indeed a work of truth and power, if they could ſee more of theſe effects of it upon the hearts and lives of men. They are better able to read the nature of a man's religion in his *life* than in the Bible. Thoſe that 'obey not thē word, may be won by the conver-'ſation' of ſuch as theſe. It is therefore a neceſſary part of our work, to labour after the poliſhing and 'perfecting of the ſaints,' that they may be ſtrong in the Lord, and fitted for their maſter's uſe.

2. Another ſort of converts, whó need our aſſiſtance, are ſuch as labour under ſome particular diſtemper, or ſuch as are often overcome by ſome particular luſt, which keeps their graces under, and makes them temptations or troubles to others, and burdens to themſelves.

Alas! there are too many ſuch perſons as theſe. Some are eſpecially addicted to pride; ſome to worldlineſs; ſome to this or that ſenſual deſire; and many to ſudden anger or violent paſſions.—Now it is our duty to give our aſſiſtance to all theſe. We ſhould labour, by diſſuaſions and clear diſcoveries of the odiouſneſs of their ſin, and by ſuitable directions about the way of remedy, to help them to a fuller conqueſt of their corruptions. We are the leaders of Chriſt's army againſt the powers

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powers of darkneſs, and we muſt reſiſt all the works of darkneſs, wherever we find them, though it be in the children of light. We muſt be no more tender of the ſins of the godly, than of the ungodly; nor ought we any more to befriend or favour them. In proportion as we love their perſons above others, ſhould we expreſs it, by oppoſing their ſins.——We muſt expect to meet with ſome tender perſons among them (eſpecially when iniquity has got to any head, and many have indulged it) who will be as pettiſh, and as impatient of reproof, as ſome worſe men; nay they will intereſt piety itſelf with their faults, and ſay that a miniſter who preaches againſt them, preaches againſt the godly. But the ſervants of Chriſt muſt do their duty, notwithſtanding men's peeviſhneſs, and muſt not ſo far 'hate their brother,' as to forbear the plain rebuking of him, and 'ſuffer ſin to 'lie upon his ſoul.'

3. A third ſort of perſons who require our regard, are DECLINING chriſtians, who have either fallen into ſome ſcandalous ſin, or have abated their zeal and diligence, and diſcover that they have 'loſt their former love.'

As the caſe of backſliders is very ſad, our diligence muſt be great for their recovery. It is ſad to themſelves, to have loſt ſo much of their life and peace and uſefulneſs; and to have become ſo ſerviceable to Satan and his cauſe. It is ſad to US,

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to ſee that all our labour is come to this;—that when we have taken ſo much pains with men, and have entertained ſuch hopes concerning them, all ſhould be ſo far fruſtrated. It is ſaddeſt of all to think that GOD ſhould be ſo abuſed by thoſe whom he hath ſo loved, and for whom he has done ſo much; that the enemy ſhould have obtained ſuch an advantage over their graces; and that CHRIST ſhould be ſo 'wounded in the houſe of his friends;' —that the name of God ſhould be evil ſpoken of through them, and that thoſe who fear him ſhould be reproached for their ſakes.—Beſides, the condition of ſuch perſons is deplorable, as a partial backſliding has a tendency towards a total apoſtacy, and would end in it, if ſpecial grace were not to prevent. The worſe the condition of ſuch chriſtians is, the more lies upon us for their effectual recovery. We ſhould 'reſtore thoſe that are overtaken with a fault, in the ſpirit of meekneſs;' and yet ſee to it, that the ſore be thoroughly ſearched and healed, what pain ſoever it coſt. We ſhould eſpecially look to the honour of the goſpel, and ſee that ſuch perſons riſe by ſuch free and full confeſſions, and by ſuch expreſſions of true repentance, that ſome reparation may be made to the church and their holy profeſſion, for the wound of diſhonour they had given both, by their ſin. Much ſkill is required to the reſtoring of ſuch ſouls.

4. Our

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4. Our aſſiſtance is alſo neceſſary for ſuch of our people as have fallen under ſome great TEMPTATION.

Every miniſter therefore, ſhould have much inſight into Satan's wiles. We, of all perſons, ſhould 'not be ignorant of his devices.' We ſhould be acquainted with the great variety of them; with the cunning craft of his inſtruments, 'who lie in 'wait to deceive,' and with all the methods uſed by the grand deceiver.—Some of our people lie under temptations to error; eſpecially the young, the unſettled, the ſelf-conceited, and ſuch as are moſt converſant with ſeducers. Young, raw, ungrounded chriſtians, are commonly of their mind who have moſt intereſt in their eſteem, and moſt opportunity of familiar converſation to draw them into their way. And as they are tinder, erroneous perſons want not the ſparks of zeal to ſet them on fire. A zeal for error and opinions of our own is natural; it is eaſily kindled and kept alive; though it is far otherwiſe with a ſpiritual zeal for God. How much prudence and induſtry then is neceſſary for a paſtor, to preſerve the flock from being corrupted with noxious conceits; and eſpecially ſuch as lie under peculiar temptations to them.

Others are under temptations to worldly-mindedneſs; others to intemperance; others to luſt. Some to one ſin, and ſome to another. A faithful paſtor therefore, ſhould have his eye upon all his

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flock; ſhould labour to be acquainted with their natural diſpoſitions; with their buſineſs in the world; with the company they live in, or are moſt converſant with; that ſo he may know where their temptations lie, and endeavour ſpeedily, prudently, and diligently to help them, both by his public preaching and private diſcourſe.

5. Another branch of our miniſterial work, is to COMFORT the diſconſolate; and to ſettle the peace of our people's ſouls, on ſure and laſting grounds. To which end, the quality of their complaints, and the courſe of their lives had need to be known; for all perſons muſt not have the ſame conſolations, who have the ſame complaints *.

6. Strong and lively Chriſtians alſo have need of our aſſiſtance; partly to prevent their temptations and declenſions, or to preſerve the grace they have; partly to help them to a further progreſs and increaſe; and partly to direct them in the improvement of their graces for the ſervice of Chriſt and the aſſiſtance of their brethren: as alſo to encourage them (eſpecially the aged, the tempted, and the afflicted) to perſeverve, that they 'may 'receive their crown.'

* The author's reaſon for his brevity on this head, was, that he had particularly treated of it in his other works, (ſee Vol. I. p. 284, 477, and his *Directions for ſpiritual Comfort*, Vol. II. p. 846). He refers alſo to other authors, particularly to *Bolton's Inſtructions for right Comforting*.

III. Thoſ

III. Thoſe whoſe characters are DOUBTFUL are alſo to be regarded both in our public and private diſcourſes.

There are ſome of our flock who, by a profeſſed willingneſs to learn and obey, make it probable that they may have true repentance and faith, who yet, by their ignorance or lukewarmneſs, or by ſome uneven walking, will occaſion us fears as great as our hopes, or greater, with regard to their preſent ſafety. We may ſee occaſion to doubt the worſt, though we have not ground to charge them with being unconverted and impenitent perſons. I think that half who come to me are of this ſort, among whom I almoſt dare pronounce ten to one to be unregenerate. It may put ſome younger miniſters to a difficuly to know what they ſhould do with this ſort of people, where they have no ſufficient ground to pronounce them godly or ungodly, whatever their fears or hopes may be.

I would adviſe you to be very cautious how you paſs too haſty or abſolute cenſures on any that you have to do with; becauſe it is not an eaſy matter to diſcern that a man is certainly graceleſs, who profeſſes to be a chriſtian. Beſides, we may diſcharge our duty with regard to ſuch perſons, without an abſolute concluſion concerning their real characters. With regard to ſuch let the following hints ſuffice.

Keep

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Keep them close to the use of public and private means. —— Be often with the lukewarm and careless, to admonish and awaken them: for this purpose take the opportunity of sickness, which will bow their hearts and open their ears.——See that they spend the Lord's day, and order their families, aright.—Draw them off from the temptations to, and occasions of sin.—Charge them to come to you for help when their minds are distressed, to open to you their temptations and dangers before they are swallowed up by them.—In your preaching, and your discourse with them, strike at the great radical sins; self-seeking, carnality, sensuality, pride, worldly-mindedness, infidelity, &c.—Press them to read the scriptures, and other good books; and direct them to such as are most likely to awaken them.—Engage their godly neighbours to have an eye over them.—Keep up discipline in the church to awe them.—But especially maintain the life of grace in your own souls, that it may so appear to them in all your sermons, that every one who comes cold to the assembly, may have his mind properly affected before he departs.

[There is another sort of men, whom you will probably meet with, in regard to whom it may not be improper here to add a few hints of advice, namely,]

IV. Opi-

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IV. OPINIONATED perſons; who being tainted with pride and ſelf-conceit, are more ready to teach, than to be taught;—who rather than receive inſtruction from you, will quarrel with you, as ignorant and erroneous.

The preſervation of the unity and peace of your congregations, very much depends on your right dealing with ſuch perſons as theſe. To cure them of their conceits, and to prevent others being infected with them, take theſe directions.

1. If any ſuch perſon ſhould fall in your way in any of your private conferences with your people, and by his impertinence ſhould ſtrive to divert you from better diſcourſe, tell him that the meeting was appointed for another uſe, and that you think it improper to pervert it from that. However let him know, that you do not ſay this to avoid any trial of the truth, but that you will, at any other time, give him ſatisfaction, or receive inſtruction from him.

2. When you meet him with ſuch an intent, aſk him ſuch queſtions as appear to be of great importance, but take care to throw ſome difficulty in his way, and be ſure to put him moſtly upon defining or diſtinguiſhing. If he diſcover his ignorance in the caſe propoſed, endeavour to humble him under a ſenſe of his pride and preſumption, in going about with a teaching, contentious behaviour,

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viour, while he is ſo ignorant in things of ſuch great moment. At the ſame time, ſee to it that you be able to give him information with regard to thoſe points, wherein you find him ignorant.

3. Take care to diſcern the ſpirit of the man. If he be a ſettled perverſe ſchiſmatic, quite tranſported with pride, humble him as much as you can before other perſons. But if you find him godly, and there is hope of his reſtoration, only do this in a private manner. Do not let fall any bitter words that would tend to his diſparagement. We muſt always be as tender of the reputation of good men, as our fidelity to them and the truth will permit. We muſt 'reſtore ſuch with the 'ſpirit of meekneſs.' There is little hope of doing them any good, if you once exaſperate them, and diſaffect them towards you.

4. If you come to debate any controverſy with ſuch perſons, tell them that ſeeing they think themſelves able to teach you, it is your deſire to learn. When they have ſpoken their minds in their dictatorial manner, let them know, that they have ſaid nothing new to you; that you had conſidered of it all before, and that if you had ſeen divine evidence for it, you had received it long ago: that you are truly willing to receive all truth, but that you have far better evidence for the doctrines you have embraced than they have for the contrary. If they deſire to hear what your evidence is, tell them, that

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that if they will hear as *learners*, with impartiality and humility, freely entertaining the truth, you will communicate your evidence to them in the beſt manner you can.——When you have brought any one to this, ſhew him your reaſons againſt the groſſeſt imperfections of his own diſcourſe, and then give him a few of the cleareſt texts of ſcripture in ſupport of your ſentiments. When you have done, lend him ſome Book that beſt defends the truth in queſtion; deſire him to peruſe it carefully, and to bring you a ſober ſolid anſwer to it if, after the peruſal, he judge it to be unſound. And if you can, faſten ſome one of the moſt ſtriking evidences on him before you leave him. If he refuſe to read the book, endeavour to convince him of his unfaithfulneſs to the truth and to his own ſoul.

But above all, before you part, ſum up the truths wherein you are both agreed. Aſk ſuch a perſon whether he ſuppoſe that you may obtain ſalvation if you live according to your own faith? And if he will allow that you may, whether they who are ſo far agreed ſhould not live in love and peace, as children of the ſame God, and heirs of the ſame kingdom? Whether, notwithſtanding your ſmaller difference, you are not bound to hold communion in public worſhip and church relation, and to walk together in the fear of God? And whether

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whether it be not ſchiſm to ſeparate for the ſake of ſo ſmall a diſagreement.

5. In order to preſerve the church from ſuch an infection it is deſirable, that the miniſter be ſo far ſuperior to the people, as to be able to teach them, and keep them in awe, and manifeſt their weakneſſes to themſelves and others.——The truth is (a truth which cannot be hid) it is much owing to the weakneſs of miniſters, that our poor people run into ſo many factions. When a proud ſeducer has a nimble tongue, and a miniſter is ſo dull or ignorant as to be confounded by him in company, it brings him into contempt, and overthrows the weak, who judge *his* to be the beſt cauſe, that talks in the moſt confident, plauſible, and triumphant manner.

6. Endeavour frequently and thoroughly to poſſeſs your people's minds with the nature, neceſſity, and daily uſe of the great unqueſtionable principles of religion, and of the great ſin and danger of a perverſe zeal about the lower points; eſpecially before the greater are well underſtood. Convince them of the obligations we are all under, to maintain the unity and peace of the church.

If any ſmall, but hurtful, controverſy ſhould ariſe, in order to divert them from it, do you raiſe a greater yourſelf; which you have better advantage to manage, and which is not likely to make a diviſion. Let contentious perſons know that there are

are greater difficulties than theirs, firſt to be reſolved. Go and converſe with the perſons whom you perceive to be affected with any noxious conceits, as ſoon as poſſible. When a fire is kindling, reſiſt it in the beginning, and make not light of the ſmalleſt ſpark.

7. Preach to ſuch auditors as theſe, ſome higher points of doctrine, [about which they need information.] Feed them not always 'with milk,' but ſometimes with 'ſtrong meat;' for it exceedingly puffs them up with pride, when they hear nothing from miniſters, but what they already know, and can ſay themſelves. This it is that makes them think themſelves as wiſe as you, and as fit to be teachers, and it is this that hath ſet ſo many of them on preaching: for they believe that you know no more than you preach.—However, do not neglect the great fundamentals of religion, nor wrong other perſons for their ſakes.

8. Be ſure to preach as little as poſſible againſt ſuch perſons as theſe. Never in a direct manner oppoſe their ſect *by name*, or any reproachful titles; for ſuch people are ordinarily very tender, proud, paſſionate, and raſh; ſo that they will but hate you, and fly from you as an enemy, and ſay that you rail at them. Without mentioning *them*, lay the grounds clearly and ſoundly, which muſt ſubvert their errors. If you are obliged at any time to deal with them directly, handle the controverſy thoroughly,

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thoroughly, peaceably, and convincingly. Be not however, long upon it; do not say all that can be said; but choose that which they can have the least pretence to quarrel with, and omit what would require more trouble to defend.

9. Keep up private meetings, and draw these persons in among you: manage them prudently, and by this means you may keep them from such meetings among themselves as will promote divisions. Professors very commonly will have private meetings; which, if well conducted, are of great use to their edification; but if not, will be of bad consequence.

In the management of them for the present purpose, observe the following rules. Be sure that you give a constant attendance. Let not the exercises of the meeting be such as encourage private men's ostentation of their gifts, but such as tend to the edification of the people. Do not let private men preach or expound scripture; nor let every one speak to questions of his own proposing. Repeat [the substance of] the sermons you have preached; call upon God in prayer, and sing his praise. Yet let there be some opportunity for the people to speak. When you have done repeating, give them liberty to propose any difficulties they want to have resolved, respecting the subject in hand, or any other. If you perceive any of them bent upon the exercise of their abilities for

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for oſtentation, be not too ſevere upon them, but mildly let them know, that it is for their good, and the edification of the church, that you oppoſe it. However,

10. Make uſe of your people's gifts to the uttermoſt, as your helpers, in their proper places, in an ordinary way, and under your guidance. This may prevent them from uſing them in a diſorderly way, in oppoſition to you. It has been a great cauſe of ſchiſm, that miniſters have contemptuouſly refuſed to make uſe of private men's talents for their aſſiſtance, and thruſt them too far from holy things. The good work is likely to go on but poorly, if none but miniſters are employed in it. By a prudent improvement of the gifts of the more able Chriſtians (none of which God gave to be buried) we may receive much help from them. For inſtance:

Urge them to be diligent in teaching, catechizing, and praying with their own families. Recommend it to them to ſtep out now and then, to their ignorant neighbours, to catechize and inſtruct them, in meekneſs and patience. Deſire them to go often to impenitent and ſcandalous ſinners, and to endeavour, with all poſſible ſkill and earneſtneſs, yet alſo with love and patience, to reform them, to convert, and ſave their ſouls.—— Acquaint them with their duty of watching over each other in brotherly-love; of admoniſhing and

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and exhorting one another daily. If any of them walk diſorderly, to reprove them, and if they prevail not, 'to tell the officers of the church,' that they may be further dealt with, as Chriſt has appointed.—At your private meetings employ them in prayer. In ſome caſes, ſend them to viſit particular perſons in your ſtead, when you are prevented from going. Let ſome of them be choſen to repreſent, and be agents for the church, in affairs of importance relating to it. Let ſuch as are fit, be made ſubſervient officers, I mean *Deacons*, that they may afford you help in a regular way; and then they will diſcern themſelves obliged, by their relation, to maintain the unity of the church, and the authority of the miniſtry. But be ſure that they be men competently qualified for the office.

I am perſuaded, if miniſters had thus uſed the abilities of their ableſt members, they might have prevented much of the diviſion, diſtraction, and apoſtacy, that have befallen us; for they would then have found work enough upon their hands, for higher parts than theirs, without invading the miniſtry; and would have ſeen cauſe to bewail the inequality of their abilities to the work which belonged to them. Experience would have convinced and humbled them more than our words will do.

11. Still

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11. Still keep up chriſtian love and familiarity even with thoſe that have begun to warp and make diviſions: loſe not your intereſt in them while you have any thoughts of attempting their recovery.

If they withdraw into ſeparate meetings, follow them, and enter into a mild debate as to the lawfulneſs of it. Tell them that you have a mind to hear what they have to ſay, and to be among them for their good, if they will give you leave, for fear they ſhould run to further evil. You will thereby prevent much reviling, and the venting of further errors, and by a moderate gentle oppoſition of them, may in time, convince them of their folly: and by this means, if any ſeducers come from abroad to confirm them, you will be ready to oppoſe them, and ſo you will at leaſt do much to prevent the increaſe of their party.

Miniſters themſelves have occaſioned many of the diviſions in England, by contemning thoſe that have withdrawn into ſeparate meetings; by talking againſt them, and by reproving them in the pulpit, while they have been entire ſtrangers to them, or have ſhunned their company; and in the mean time have given ſeducers an opportunity to be familiar with them, and to do what they pleaſed with them without contradiction.—Oh that miniſters had been leſs guilty of the errors and ſchiſms that they talk againſt! But it is eaſier to chide ſectaries in the pulpit, and ſubſcribe a teſtimony againſt

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againſt them, than to play the ſkilful phyſician for their cure, or to do the tenth part of our duty to prevent or heal their diſorders. I am not finding fault with prudent reprehenſions of them in public; but I think too many of us have cauſe to fear, leſt we do but publickly proclaim our own ſhame, by our negligence or weakneſs; and leſt, in condemning and teſtifying againſt them, we teſtify againſt and condemn ourſelves.

12. In order to preſerve your church from diviſions, and to keep your people from running after irregular, libertine preachers, be ſure that you never let theſe authors of ſchiſm out-do you in any thing that is good.

As truth ſhould be more effectual for ſanctification than error, if you give them this advantage, you give them the day, and all your diſputations will do but little good. Weak people judge all by the outward appearance and by the effects, not being able to judge of the doctrine itſelf. They think he has the beſt cauſe, whom they take to be the beſt man. I extend this rule both to doctrine and to life. e. g. If a libertine preach *Free-grace*, do you preach it up more effectually than he: be much upon it, and make it more glorious, on right grounds, than he can do on his wrong. If on the like pretence he magnify the grace of *Love*, do not contradict him in the affirmative, only in the negative and deſtructive part: but go beyond him, and

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and preach up the Love of God, with its motives and effects, more fully and effectually than he can do, on the corrupt grounds on which he proceeds; or elſe you will make all the ſilly people believe, that the difference between you and him is, that he is for Free-grace, and for the Love of God, and that you are againſt both. So if an enthuſiaſt talks of the Holy Ghoſt, as the light and witneſs and law within us, do you fall upon that ſubject too, and do that well which he does ill. Preach up the office of the Holy Spirit; his indwelling and operations; the light and teſtimony and law within us, better than he does.—You muſt *dwell* upon theſe things in your preaching, as well as he; for the people will take no notice of a ſhort conceſſion. I might mention many more inſtances to this purpoſe, but theſe will be ſufficient to ſhew what I mean: the ſum of which is, that preaching TRUTH is the moſt ſucceſsful way of confuting error. Further,

We ſhould be careful that ſeducers do not excel us in the Practice of religious duties, any more than in defending any ſacred truths.—Do any of them expreſs a hatred of ſin, and a deſire of church-reformation? We ſhould much more. Do they, when they meet together, ſpend their time in religious diſcourſe, inſtead of vain jangling? Let us do ſo much more. Are they unwearied in propagating their opinions? Let us be much more diligent in propagating the truth. Will they con-

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deſcend to the meaneſt, and creep into houſes to lead captive the ſilleſt of the flock? Let us ſtoop as low, and be as diligent to do them good. Are they loving to their party, and contemners of the world? Let us be lovers of *all:* eſpecially of all the ſaints. Let us 'do good to 'all, eſpecially to thoſe of the houſehold of faith.' Let us love an enemy as well as they can do a friend. Let us be more juſt than they; more merciful than they; more humble, meek, and patient than they; 'for this is the will of God, that 'by well-doing, we put to ſilence the ignorance of 'fooliſh men.'—There is no virtue wherein your example will do more to abate men's prejudices, than humility, meekneſs, and ſelf-denial. Forgive injuries, and 'be not overcome of evil, but over-'come evil with good.' Imitate our bleſſed Lord, 'who when he was reviled, reviled not again.' Take not up carnal weapons againſt your enemies, but overcome them with kindneſs, patience, and gentleneſs. If you believe that CHRIST was more imitable than Cæſar or Alexander, and that it is more glorious to be a chriſtian than a conqueror, or to be a man than a beaſt, contend with charity and not with violence. If we thus excel theſe men in a holy, harmleſs, righteous, merciful, fruitful, and heavenly life, as well as in ſoundneſs of doctrine, 'by our fruits we ſhall be known;' and the weaker ſort of people will ſee the truth, in this reflection of it, who cannot ſee it in itſelf. Then

our

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our 'light will ſo ſhine before men, that they may be led to glorify our father who is in heaven;' and even 'they that obey not the word, may, without 'the word, be won by the converſation' of their teachers. — Oh how happy had England been; how happy had all the churches been, if the miniſters of the goſpel had taken theſe courſes! this would have done more againſt error and ſchiſm, than all our exclaiming againſt them hath done, or than all the force of the magiſtrate can do.

CHAP. IV.

Of CATECHISING*: *with peculiar Directions in reference to it.*

FOR the better management of this work, the following directions may be of ſervice:—they are of two kinds, viz. for bringing your people to comply with your deſign,—and for executing it in the moſt acceptable and uſeful manner.

* By *Catechiſing*, the author meant, not only hearing perſons repeat, and expounding to them, a *Form of words*, containing the principles of religion; but propoſing to them familiar queſtions, in order to judge of their knowledge and diſpoſitions, ſo as to be the more capable of giving them ſuitable inſtructions and admonitions. And this method he recommends not only with reſpect to children, but thoſe who are come to years of maturity.

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I. In order to bring your people to comply with this method of inſtruction, it will be a matter of vaſt importance to behave yourſelves, through the main courſe of your miniſtry, in ſuch a manner as may convince them of your ability, and your unfeigned love to them. When people are ſatisfied that a miniſter is qualified for his work, and intends no private ends of his own, but merely their good, they will more readily ſtoop to his advice, and be perſuaded by him.

Suppoſing this general preparation, the next thing to be done is, to convince your people of the benefit and neceſſity of this method of inſtruction, for the good of their ſouls.——In order to this, it may be proper to preach ſome plain and ſerious ſermons, to ſhew the benefit and neceſſity of an acquaintance with divine truths in general, particularly the great principles of religion; and that perſons advanced in life have equal need to be inſtructed in them with others, and in ſome reſpects greater.—Make them underſtand that this is not an arbitrary buſineſs of your deviſing or impoſing, but that neceſſity is laid upon you to look to every member of your flock, according to your ability, and that if you neglect to do it, they may 'periſh in their iniquities, and their blood be 'required at your hands.'

When

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When this is done, furniſh every family that needs it with a catechiſm, or ſee that they furniſh themſelves. Take a catalogue of the names of all thoſe whom you intend thus to inſtruct, that you may know whom to expect, and who fail to give their attendance.—Deal very gently with them, and take off all diſcouragements as effectually as you can. Do not inſiſt upon every perſon's committing the catechiſm to memory; but, where they labour under peculiar difficulties, only exhort them to read it often, and get the ſubſtance of it into their minds and hearts.—If any perſons will not ſubmit to be thus inſtructed by you, go and expoſtulate with them; know what their reaſons are; and convince them of the ſinfulneſs and danger of contemning the help that is offered them.—Souls are ſo precious, that we ſhould not loſe one for want of labour; but ſhould follow them while there is any hope, and not give them up as deſperate till there be no remedy *.

II. Having

* "Ignorant ſouls (ſays Mr. *Gurnal*) feel no ſuch ſmart as to put them upon inquiring for a phyſician. If the miniſter ſtay till they ſend for him to inſtruct them, he may ſooner hear the bell go for them than any meſſenger come for him. You muſt ſeek them out, and not expect that they will come to you. Theſe are a ſort of people that are more afraid of their remedy than their diſeaſe, and ſtudy more to hide their ignorance than to have it cured. It ſhould make us pity them the more becauſe they can pity themſelves ſo little.——It is an unhappineſs to

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II. Having brought your people to comply with this kind of inſtruction, the next thing to be conſidered is, how you ſhould deal the moſt effectually with them in the work.

And I muſt ſay that I think it is a much eaſier matter to compoſe and preach a good ſermon, than to deal rightly with an ignorant man for his inſtruction in the principles of religion. This work will try the abilities and tempers of miniſters; it will ſhew the difference between one man and another, more than pulpit-preaching can do. Good biſhop USHER obſerves, "As the laying of the foundation "ſkillfully, is a matter of the greateſt importance "in the whole building, ſo it is the very maſter-"piece of the wiſeſt builder. Thus the apoſtle "PAUL conceived of it when he ſaid, *According "to the grace of God given to me, as a wiſe maſter "builder, I laid the foundation.* The neglect of "this, is the fruſtrating the whole work of the mi-"niſtry."—The directions which I think ſhould be obſerved in the managing this work are the following.

ſome of us, who have to do with a multitude, that we cannot attend on them, as their needs require——but let us look to it, that though we cannot do what we ſhould, we be not wanting in what we may."—*Gurnal's Chriſtian Armour*, p. 235. quoted by the author at the end of his preface. The whole paſſage is worth reading.

1. When

1. When your people, one family or more, come to you, (which perhaps it will be beſt for them to do*) begin your work with a ſhort preface to remove all diſcouragements, and to prepare them for your inſtructions, *e. g.* "It may perhaps appear to ſome of you (my friends) an uncommon and troubleſome buſineſs, which I now put you upon: but I hope you will not think it needleſs. Had I thought ſo, I ſhould have ſaved you and myſelf this labour. But God has told me in his word, how great a thing it is to have the charge of ſouls, and that the blood of them that periſh will be required at the hands of ſuch miniſters as neglect them; ſo that my conſcience will not ſuffer me to be ſo guilty of ſuch a neglect, as I have been. The Lord only knows how long you and I may be together; it therefore concerns me to do what I can for your ſalvation, and my own, before I leave you and the world. I hope you will be glad of help in ſo needful a work, and not think much

* Mr. BAXTER, in his preface, tells us what was his method: "At the delivery of the catechiſms (ſays he) I take a catalogue of all the perſons of underſtanding in the pariſh; the clerk goes a week beforehand to every family to tell them when to come, *e. g.* One family at eight o'clock, the next at nine, the next at ten, &c."—It will generally be allowed that in the preſent day, there are few places in which this method would be practicable. And moſt will judge it far preferable, in every view, for a miniſter to go *from houſe to houſe*. ED.

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of it that I put you to this trouble, when even the trifles of the world cannot be gotten without much greater.

2. In general, take each perſon alone, and diſcourſe with him out of the hearing of the reſt; for ſome do not like to be queſtioned before others, and cannot anſwer you with freedom. However, let none be preſent but thoſe of the ſame family, or thoſe with whom they are familiar. I find by experience that, in general, people will bear plain and cloſe dealing about their ſin, their miſery, and their duty, when you have them alone, better than when others are preſent.

3. As for thoſe that commit a catechiſm to memory, it may be proper at the beginning of theſe exerciſes, to take an account of what they have learned, and to hear them repeat the anſwers to each queſtion.

4. When you form queſtions of your own to propoſe to them, be careful of the following things. —Let them be ſuch as they may perceive to be of great importance, and of the neareſt concernment to themſelves: *e. g.* "What do you think becomes of men when they die? Do you believe that you have ſinned? What doth ſin deſerve?—What remedy hath God provided for ſaving ſinful and miſerable ſouls? Hath any one ſuffered for ſin in our ſtead? Who are they that God will pardon? What change muſt be made on all that will be ſaved?

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saved? And how is it made? Where is our chief happiness, and what must our hearts be most set upon?"——Take heed of asking them any nice, doubtful, or difficult questions.—Be very cautious how you put them upon definitions or descriptions: so contrive to bring the predicate into your questions, that they may perceive what you mean. *e. g.* "What is God? Is he flesh and blood as we are, or is he a spirit?"—Look not after words but things; and often leave them to a bare *yes*, or *no*; for there are many elderly and even godly people who cannot speak their minds in any tolerable expressions.—If you find them at a loss, and unable to answer you, do not drive them on too hard, or too long, lest they should imagine that you only intend to puzzle and disgrace them. When you perceive them troubled that they cannot answer, take off their burden by answering the question yourself; and then do it thoroughly and plainly, that they may understand it before you leave them.

5. When you have done what you think necessary in trying their knowledge, proceed to instruct them further. This must be done according to their several characters. If the person be a professor, fall upon something which you apprehend he most needs: either explain some doctrine, or lay the foundation of some duty which you have reason to think he neglects, &c. If the person be

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groſsly ignorant, give him a plain familiar ſummary of the chriſtian religion; for though he may have it in the catechiſm, a more familiar way of diſcourſing upon it, may help him better to underſtand it. If you perceive he does not underſtand you, go over it again; then aſk him whether he does or not; and endeavour to leave it fixed in his memory.

6. If you ſuſpect any to be ungodly, whether they be groſsly ignorant or not, make a prudent inquiry into their ſtates. The leaſt offenſive way of doing it will be, to take your occaſion from ſome article in the catechiſm which they have repeated: *e. g.* "Though I have no deſire needleſsly to pry into the ſecrets of any, yet becauſe it is the office of a miniſter to give advice to his people in the matters of ſalvation, and becauſe it is ſo dangerous a thing to be miſtaken, where life or death eternal are depending, I would entreat you to deal faithfully, and tell me whether you ever found this great change upon your hearts; whether you live in this or that ſin; or, whether you perform this or that duty, &c."——If any ſuch perſon tells you he hopes he is converted, ſhew him, in the plaineſt manner, what true converſion is; then renew and enforce the inquiry. Aſk him ſuch queſtions as theſe: "Can you truly ſay, that all the known ſins of your paſt life are the grief of your heart? That you have felt yourſelf undone by them? That

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That you have gladly entertained the news of a Saviour, and have caſt your ſoul upon Chriſt alone for ſalvation?—Can you ſay from your heart that you hate the ſins which you formerly loved, and that you now love that holy life for which once you had no reliſh?——Do you live in the practice of any known ſin, or in the neglect of any known duty?—Is the main courſe and the bent of your whole life to pleaſe God, and enjoy him for ever?" —Mention particularly ſome of thoſe duties which you moſt ſuſpect him to omit, and aſk him whether he performs them; eſpecially PRAYER, in the family, and in ſecret; as alſo how he ſpends the Lord's day?

7. If you diſcern an apparent probability that the perſon is in an unconverted ſtate, your next buſineſs is to labour, with all your ſkill and power, to bring his heart to a ſenſe of his condition. Addreſs him in ſome ſuch manner as this.—" Truly friend, the Lord knows I have no mind to make your caſe worſe than it is, nor to occaſion you any unneceſſary fear or trouble; but I ſuppoſe you would take me for an enemy, and not a faithful friend, if I ſhould flatter you, and not tell you the truth. I much fear that you are yet a ſtranger to the new and divine life. If you were a chriſtian indeed, you would not have lived in ſuch a ſin, &c. &c. Alas! What have you been doing? How have you ſpent your time, that you are ſo ignorant, and ſo unprepared for death if you ſhould now be

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called to it? If you had died, in an unconverted ſtate, what had become of you, and where had you now been?"—Here be very earneſt; if you get not the heart you get nothing. That which does not affect is ſoon forgotten.

Let this be followed with a practical exhortation concerning the nature and neceſſity of cloſing with Chriſt, and the uſe of every proper means, for the time to come, to avoid former ſins. Speak to them to this effect.—"I am heartily ſorry to find you in ſo ſad a caſe, but ſhould be more ſo to leave you in it. Let me therefore entreat you, for the Lord's ſake and for your own ſake, to regard what I ſhall ſay to you. It is a great mercy that you was not cut off in your natural ſtate; that you have yet life and time; eſpecially that there is a ſufficient remedy provided for you in the blood of Chriſt. There is yet a poſſibility of your being converted and ſaved. Let me then entreat you, not to reſt in your preſent condition, ſince, if you do, you muſt periſh for ever. Think ſeriouſly of the vanity of the world; the awful nature of eternity; and the importance of religion. Without any delay, accept of the ſalvation offered in the goſpel, and cloſe with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt who offers it to you. Reſolve immediately againſt your former ſins, and be diligent in the uſe of all God's appointed means, till the great change of regeneration be wrought. Becauſe you cannot effect this change yourſelf, betake

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betake yourſelf daily to God in prayer, and beg of him to effect it, as well as pardon your ſins. Avoid carefully all temptations to ſin and occaſions of it. Forſake your evil companions, and join the company of them that fear God. Eſpecially ſpend the Lord's day in holy exerciſes, both in public and in private. Loſe not any time, but eſpecially, loſe not that moſt precious time which God has given you to be inſtructed by him, and prepared for your latter end."—Be ſure, if you can, to get a promiſe from ſuch perſons that they will attend to your advice. Aſk it ſolemnly; reminding them of the preſence of God who hears their promiſes, and will require the performance.

8. Through the whole of theſe exerciſes, ſee that your manner, as well as matter, be ſuited to the end. Make a difference according to the difference of the perſons you have to deal with. With the dull and obſtinate, you muſt be earneſt and ſevere: with the tender and timorous, you muſt mildly inſiſt upon direction and encouragement. With the young, you muſt repreſent the ſhame and evil of ſenſual pleaſures, and the neceſſity of mortification. With the aged, you muſt diſgrace the preſent world; you muſt repreſent the nearneſs of their change; and the aggravations of their ſins, if they live and die impenitent. With your inferiors, you may be very free; with your ſuperiors and elders, you muſt ſpeak with more

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more reverence. To the rich, the nature and neceſſity of ſelf-denial muſt be opened: to the poor, we muſt ſhew the great riches of glory propoſed to them in the goſpel.

The evil and danger of thoſe ſins muſt be inſiſted on, to which each one's age, or ſex, or temperature of body, or employment in the world, does moſt incline them. Be as condeſcending, familiar, and plain as poſſible with thoſe of the weakeſt capacities. Give them the ſcripture proofs of all that you ſay, to convince them that it is not you only, but God, by you, who ſpeaks to them. Be ſerious in all, but eſpecially in your applications. I ſcarcely fear any thing more than leſt ſome careleſs miniſters will hurry over this work ſuperficially, and deſtroy this, as they do all other duties, by turning it into a mere formality; propoſing a few cold queſtions, and giving a few cold words of advice, without any life and feeling in themſelves, or any likelihood of producing any feeling in the hearers. But ſurely he that values ſouls, and knows what opportunity is before him, will act accordingly.

To this end, it will be of conſiderable importance that both before, and in the work, we take great pains with our own hearts; eſpecially to ſtrengthen our belief of the truth of the goſpel, and the inviſible glory and miſery which are to come. This work will greatly try the ſtrength of

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our faith. A ſuperficial chriſtian will feel his zeal quite fail him (eſpecially when the duty is grown common) for want of a belief in the things he is treating of, to keep it alive. In the pulpit, from the preſs, and in public acts, where there is room for oſtentation, the hypocritical miniſter will give you his beſt: but an affected fervency and hypocritical ſtage-action will not hold out long in ſuch duties as theſe: they are other kind of men that muſt effectually perform them.—We ſhould endeavour to prepare ourſelves for this buſineſs particularly by private Prayer. And, if the time will permit, it will be beſt to begin and end theſe exerciſes I am recommending with a ſhort prayer with our people.—Laſtly; if God has given you ability, extend your charity to the poorer ſort before they part from you, for their relief, and for the time that is thus taken from their labours; eſpecially for the encouragement of thoſe that make the beſt proficiency.

CHAP. V.

Arguments for perſonal Inſtruction, particularly by familiar Catechiſing.

IT muſt, indeed, be acknowledged that the method of inſtruction which has been propoſed is attended with many difficulties and diſcouragements.

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ments. Many ariſe both from our people, and from ourſelves.—There is in *us* much dulneſs and lazineſs; ſo that it will not be eaſy to bring us to be faithful in ſo hard a work. We have alſo a baſe man-pleaſing diſpoſition, which will ſuffer us to let men go quietly to hell, leſt we ſhould loſe their reſpect. We are more ready to venture on the diſpleaſure of God, and their everlaſting miſery, than draw upon us their ill-will; and are ſo carnal that we dare not be faithful for fear of loſing our income, or bringing ourſelves into difficulties. Many of us have a fooliſh baſhfulneſs, which makes us backward to begin this great work. We are ſo modeſt, truly, that we bluſh to ſpeak for Chriſt, or contradict the devil, or attempt to ſave a ſoul; while we are leſs aſhamed of far more ſhameful works. We are commonly too unfit for this buſineſs by reaſon of our unſkilfulneſs: we know not, as we ought, how to deal with an ignorant worldling for his ſalvation: how to get within him and win upon him; nor how to ſuit our addreſſes to men's ſeveral conditions and tempers. But the greateſt impediment of all is, that we ourſelves are too weak in the faith, and feel too little of the power of religion upon our ſouls. Our belief of divine truths and inviſible things is ſo feeble, that it will hardly excite in us ſo kind, reſolute, and conſtant a zeal as is neceſſary for this work.

Beſides

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Beſides theſe difficulties from ourſelves, we have too many to encounter from our *people*. Many of them will ſcorn to come to us to be taught, imagining they are too good to be catechiſed, or too old to learn. Many are ſo dull that they will keep away, as aſhamed of their ignorance; or, if they come, you will find it a hard matter to get them to underſtand you; and yet more difficult to work upon their hearts, ſo as to produce a ſaving change; which is our principal end, and without which our labour is almoſt loſt.—Oh what a rock is a carnal heart! How ſtrongly will it reſiſt the moſt powerful perſuaſions, and with what unconcern will ſinners hear of everlaſting life and death! And even when you have made ſome deſirable impreſſions upon them, if you have not a ſpecial care over them, their hearts will ſoon return to their former hardneſs, and their old companions and temptations will work off all again. Theſe are doubtleſs great diſcouragements; but in a neceſſary work, they ſhould excite us to the greateſt diligence. Conſider the benefits to be expected from it,—and the obligations we are under to perform it.

I. Let us conſider the *benefits* which may reaſonably be expected from this method of private inſtruction.

1. It is attended with the moſt excellent advantage for informing the judgment, and changing the will

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will of the ignorant and ungodly. It will tend greatly to inform the underſtanding, to have the ſum of chriſtianity in the memory. The bare words will be but of little advantage, yet when the words are plain Engliſh, he who has them by rote, is much more likely to know the truths contained in them than another. Such forms of ſound words (though ſome deride all catechiſms as unprofitable) may be of admirable uſe; eſpecially as we ſhall have an opportunity, by perſonal converſe with thoſe who have committed them to memory, to try how far they underſtand them; to explain to them what they do not underſtand; and to inſiſt on thoſe particulars which we apprehend each perſon has moſt need to hear.

In ſome reſpects private inſtruction has the preference to *preaching** What other argument need we

* "Private, frequent, ſpiritual conference (ſaith Dr. *Hammond*) between fellow-chriſtians, but eſpecially between the Preſbyter and thoſe of his charge, particularly in the diſcuſſion of every man's ſpecial ſins, infirmities, and inclinations, may prove very uſeful and advantageous (in order to ſpiritual directions, reproof and comfort) to the making the man of God perfect. And to tell the truth, if the pride and ſelf-conceit of ſome, the careleſſneſs of others, the baſhfulneſs of a third ſort, the nauſeating and inſtant fatiety of any good in a fourth, if the follies of men and the artifices of Satan, had not put this practice quite out of faſhion among us, there is no doubt but more good might be done by miniſters this way, than is now done

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we than our own experience? I ſeldom deal with men on this great buſineſs, in private ſerious conference, but they go away with ſome ſeeming convictions, and promiſes of new obedience; and ſometimes with a deep remorſe, and affecting ſenſe of their condition. Yea, I have found (and I doubt not but you have experienced the ſame) that an ignorant ſot, who for a long time had been an unprofitable hearer, has got more knowledge and remorſe of conſcience, in half an hour's cloſe converſation, than he did by ten years public preaching. I know *that* is the moſt excellent means, becauſe we therein ſpeak to many at once; but this private way of preaching is uſually far more effectual, for many reaſons. *e. g.* We have the beſt opportunity to imprint religious truths upon the heart, when we can ſpeak to each one's particular neceſſity, and can ſay to the ſinner, 'Thou art the man;' when we can mention his particular caſe, and addreſs him in regard to it with familiar importunity. If any thing in the

done by any other means, even than by that of public preaching, which is now almoſt ſolely depended upon: it being, as *Quintilian* ſaith, (comparing public and private inſtruction of youth) a more likely way to fill narrow mouth'd bottles (and ſuch are the moſt of us) to take them ſingle in the hand, and pour water into them, than to ſet them altogether, and throw ever ſo much water upon them." *Dr. Hammond on the power of the keys.* Ch. iv. § 104.

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world is likely to do our people good, it is this. They will underſtand a familiar ſpeech, who hear a ſermon as if it were nonſenſe. Beſides, they have far greater advantage for the application of it to themſelves. By this means, you will hear their objections, and know where Satan has the moſt advantage over them, or what is it that reſiſts the truth; and ſo may be the more able effectually to convince them. We can here anſwer their pleas, drive them to a ſtand, and urge them to diſcover their reſolutions for the future.—Again; in private, we may ſpeak in a much *plainer* manner than we can in public. The plaineſt preacher can hardly ſpeak plain enough in the pulpit, to make the illiterate underſtand him. I have often been ſurpriſed to find how groſsly ignorant many are who have been my hearers ſeveral years; who are as unable to anſwer ſome of the plaineſt queſtions as if they had never heard the goſpel in their lives. In public we cannot uſe ſuch homely expreſſions, nor ſo many repetitions as their dulneſs requires; but in private we may. In public our ſpeeches are long: we quite over-run their underſtandings and their memories; ſo that they are confounded and unable to follow us. One thing drives out another, ſo that they know not what we have been ſaying: but in private we may take our work *gradatim*, and take our hearers with us as we go. By their anſwers to our queſtions we may ſee how far they go with us, and what we have next to do. In public,

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lic, by our ſpeaking *alone*, we loſe their attention; but when they are interlocutors we can eaſily cauſe them to attend. I conclude therefore, that public preaching will not be ſufficient, nor effectual for the converſion of ſo many, as this method. Long may you ſtudy and preach to little purpoſe, if you neglect private inſtruction.

2. This work, if well managed, will be the means of the moſt *orderly* building up thoſe that are converted, and eſtabliſhing them in the faith.

It hazards the whole work, or at leaſt very much hinders it, when we do it not in a proper order. How can you build if you do not lay a good foundation? It is owing to the neglect of this, that there are ſo many deluded novices in religion, and that ſo many are labouring in vain; 'ſtill learning, without coming to the knowledge 'of the truth;' like thoſe that would read before they have learned the letters. This makes ſo many fall away, or to be 'ſhaken by every wind of 'doctrine.' Theſe fundamentals are what muſt lead men to further truths; theſe they muſt build upon; theſe muſt actuate all their graces, and animate all their duties; theſe muſt fortify them againſt particular temptations. He that knows theſe well, knows as much as is neceſſary to make him happy. He that knows theſe beſt, is the moſt underſtanding chriſtian. He that knows not theſe, knows nothing. The moſt godly people, therefore,

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fore, in your congregation will find it worth their while to be thus inſtructed. If you would edify and well eſtabliſh them, be diligent in this work.

3. Private inſtruction will tend to make our preaching better underſtood and regarded.

When you have acquainted perſons with the principles, they will more eaſily perceive what you are aiming at; it will prepare their minds and open the way to their hearts; whereas without this you may loſe the moſt of your labour; and the more pains you take in accurate preparations, the leſs good you will do.

4. By this means you will become familiar with your people; which is no inconſiderable advantage.

The want of this is a great impediment to the ſucceſs of our labours. By diſtance and ſtrangeneſs, abundance of miſtakes between miniſters and people are occaſioned. Beſides, familiarity tends to beget thoſe affections which may open their ears to further teaching. When we are familiar with them they will be encouraged to uſe freedom in opening their doubts to us, for our reſolution. But when a miniſter knows not his people, or is as ſtrange to them as if he did not, it muſt be a great hinderance to his doing them any good.—By this familiarity we ſhall be better acquainted with each perſon's temper and ſpiritual ſtate, and ſo ſhall know better how to watch over them, how to preach to, and diſcourſe with them; how to lament for, or

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or rejoice over them; and how to pray to God on their behalf.——We ſhall hereby be the better enabled to help them againſt temptations, and prevent their falling into any hurtful errors; of which they are in great danger while their paſtors are ſtrangers to them, and ſeducers are very familiar with them.—Once more; this familiarity with our people will better ſatisfy us in the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper; as we ſhall hereby better know who are fit, and who are unfit for it. Whereas many will queſtion a miniſter, who examines his people in order to this ordinance, by what authority he does it, and will not ſubmit to ſuch an examination, the ſame work will be done in ſuch a courſe as this, in an unexceptionable manner.

5. This method will better inform the people concerning the nature of the miniſterial office, or awaken them to a better attention to it.

It is common for men to think that our work is nothing more than to preach well, to baptize, adminiſter the Lord's ſupper, and viſit the ſick; they are therefore unwilling to ſubmit to more; and through a common neglect, miniſters are become ſuch ſtrangers to their own calling, that they think of doing nothing more. They have hundreds of people to whom they never ſpoke a word perſonally for their ſalvation. Nay, the omiſſion of perſonal inſtruction is grown ſo frequent, even among pious and able men, that the diſgrace of it is abated,

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ted, and a man may be guilty of it without any diſhonour or obſervation.—Shew the world then, by your practice, what the nature of our office is; and I hope that you will ſee the time, when neglect of perſonal overſight will be taken for as ſcandalous an omiſſion, as preaching but one part of the day would now be eſteemed.—In overthrowing the errors of Popery many have run into the contrary extreme; leſt they ſhould ſeem to favour auricular confeſſion, they have neglected all perſonal inſtruction. I am paſt doubt that the popiſh auricular confeſſion is a ſinful novelty; but I muſt ſay (though ſome will think it ſtrange) that our neglect of perſonal inſtruction is much worſe. Let us, by our practice, ſhew careleſs miniſters, as well as our people, the importance and neceſſity of this duty.

Further; as this courſe will acquaint the people with our duty towards them, it will alſo inform them of theirs towards us; and then they will be more likely to diſcharge it better. This I mention not for our own ſakes only, but becauſe their ſalvation is much concerned in it. If they do not know what our office is, viz. that it is one great branch of it to admoniſh and inſtruct them with regard to their particular caſes, it is no wonder if they neglect to apply to us for our help, to their own prejudice. The matter is now come to this paſs, that if we exhort them to come for inſtruc-

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tion, or begin to diſcourſe with them about their ſouls, they queſtion our authority, and look upon us as proud, pragmatical perſons, who would bear rule over their conſciences. They in general diſcover no more wiſdom nor gratitude, than if they were to quarrel with a perſon for quenching the fire when their houſes were burning; or if, when one offered to ſave them from drowning, they ſhould aſk him by what authority he did it.—And what is it that has brought our people to this ignorance of their duty, but our neglect of ours? Where it is the cuſtom (as among the *Papiſts*) they are willing to confeſs all their ſins to the prieſt; but among us they diſdain to be queſtioned or inſtructed, becauſe it is not the cuſtom.—Let us then by our diligence in this work endeavour to make it become a common thing; and thus we ſhall facilitate the miniſterial ſervice to the next generation. If we can but eſtabliſh this cuſtom, our ſucceſſors in the miniſtry will reap the fruit of our labours, as their work will be eaſier to them; and thus we may be the means of ſaving many ſouls in ages to come, as well as in the preſent*.

* "Perhaps you who find a people rude and ignorant (like ſtones in the quarry, or trees unhewn) may not bring the work to ſuch perfection in your days as you deſire. Yet, as *David* did for *Solomon*, you may, by your pains in teaching and inſtructing, prepare materials for another who ſhall rear the Temple. *Gurnal, ubi ſupra.*

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6. Another conſiderable benefit of private inſtruction (eſpecially by catechiſms) is, that it will keep our people from much of that vanity, which now poſſeſſes their minds and takes up their time.

When workmen are employed in their ſhops, almoſt all their taſk is vanity; and children are apt to learn fooliſh ſongs and idle ſtories, and thus fill their minds with filth and rubbiſh, which occaſions them to loſe much time, and to be guilty of many idle thoughts and words. Now when they have a catechiſm to learn, and know that they muſt give an account of it, much of their time and thoughts will be better employed. It will particularly find them, and heads of families, profitable employment for the Lord's-Day.

7. As the method of inſtruction I am recommending is, by ſuppoſition, very extenſive, we have reaſon to expect the moſt *extenſive* benefits from it.

It has a more excellent deſign, and therefore we may hope it will have more important effects, than our accidental conferences with here and there a particular perſon. In ſuch occaſional diſcourſes, I obſerve miniſters ſatisfy themſelves to have ſpoken ſome few good words, but ſeldom ſet themſelves, in ſo plain and ſo cloſe a manner, to convince men of their ſin and miſery, and their need of mercy, as in this purpoſely appointed work, we ſhall have an opportunity of doing.

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In ſhort, ſo weighty and excellent is this duty, that the chief part of church-reformation is behind without it, and conſiſts in it. We are apt to look upon a reformation as what is to be wrought immediately by God, without conſidering, that it is to be effected by our means. But this we have no warrant to do: in order to it, we muſt uſe our unwearied endeavours, and particularly muſt be diligent in catechiſing and perſonal inſtruction; for this is likely to do more towards effecting ſuch a reformation as we have long prayed and hoped for, than every other means without it. Brethren, all that our forefathers have been doing for the good of the church, and for a true reformation, for ſo many years, was but to prepare the way for you to come in and do the work. They have opened you the door, and at a great expence of labours and ſufferings, have removed many of your impediments. And will you now ſtand ſtill or loiter? God forbid! Have they ſpent ſo much time in fencing the vineyard, in weeding and pruning it, to make it ready for your hands, and will you now fail, who are ſent to gather in the vintage? In the name of God, take heed that you do not fruſtrate their labours, their prayers, and their hopes!

8. The diligent proſecution of this work will do ſome good to miniſters themſelves.

It will be the beſt cure for their idleneſs and loſs of time, in unneceſſary diſcourſes, journies, or other

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recreations: and at the same time, will cut off that scandal which attends them.—Besides, it will tend to subdue our own corruptions, to increase our own graces, and consequently to procure much peace to our own consciences, and much comfort when our time and actions come to be reviewed. This constant employment of our minds and tongues against sin, and in the cause of Christ and holiness, will do much more towards habituating us to overcome our carnal inclinations, than all the austerities of Monks and Hermits, who addict themselves to unprofitable solitude, and 'hide their master's talents.' —Not to mention what an excellent means this will be, to take us, as well as our people, from vain controversies, and discourses upon lesser matters of religion, and thus to cure those unhappy contentions which too often prevail among ourselves.—Having thus considered the advantages of personal instruction, I shall now

II. Point out the obligations ministers are under to the practice of it.

1. The necessity of this duty may be argued from the regard you owe to the glory of God in the fuller success of the gospel.

God is most honoured and pleased when most souls are saved; for he hath sworn that 'he hath 'no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but had rather

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'ther that he return and live.' How gladly then ſhould you take this courſe which will moſt effectually promote this end!—O brethren! if we could generally ſet this work on foot in all the pariſhes of England, and proſecute it ſkilfully and zealouſly, what a glory would it put upon the face of the nation, and what honour would redound to God thereby! If our common ignorance were thus baniſhed, and our vanity and idleneſs turned into the ſtudy of the way of life, and every family employed in learning catechiſms, and ſpeaking of the word and works of God, what pleaſure would God take in our cities and countries! He would dwell in our habitations and make them his delight. If we increaſe the number or ſtrength of the ſaints, we thereby increaſe the honour of the King of ſaints: Chriſt will be honoured in the fruits of his blood-ſhed. And the Spirit of grace will alſo be glorified in the fruit of his operations. And do not theſe ends require us to uſe the means with diligence?

2. I may urge this duty, from the general obligation we are all under to do good; and from the regards we owe to the welfare of our people.

Every chriſtian is obliged to do all the good he can for the ſalvation of others; but every miniſter is doubly obliged, becauſe he is 'ſeparated to the 'goſpel' of Chriſt, and is to 'give himſelf up 'wholly to that work.' It is needleſs to make any further queſtion about our obligation, when

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we know in general that we are obliged to do all that is neceſſary for the converſion and ſalvation of our people, and that this work (as has been already ſhewn) is needful to theſe ends. Of theſe ſurely we cannot doubt: let us not then any longer neglect ſo reaſonable and neceſſary a duty. If the ſaving of ſouls,—of your neighbours' ſouls,—of many ſouls, from everlaſting miſery be worth your labour, up and be doing! If you would be the fathers of many new-born unto God, if you would ſee the travail of your ſouls with comfort, and be able to ſay at laſt, "Here am I and the children "that thou haſt given me," be diligent in this bleſſed work. If it would rejoice you to preſent your converts 'blameleſs and ſpotleſs to Chriſt,' and to ſee them among the ſaints in glory, praiſing the Lamb before his throne, be glad of this ſingular opportunity that is offered you. 'What is your 'hope and joy and crown of rejoicing?' Are not your ſaved people 'in the preſence of Chriſt Jeſus 'at his coming? Yea doubtleſs they are your glory 'and your joy.' If you are the miniſters of Chriſt indeed, you will long for 'the perfecting of his 'body, and the gathering in of his elect.' Your hearts will be ſet upon it, and you will 'travail as 'in birth for them till Chriſt be formed in them;' and will take all favourable opportunities, as the ſun-ſhine days in a rainy harveſt, in which it is unreaſonable and inexcuſable to be idle. Nay, if you

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you have but a ſpark of chriſtian compaſſion in you, it will appear worth your utmoſt labour to 'ſave 'ſouls from death and to cover a multitude of 'ſins.'

O remember when you are talking with the unconverted, that there is an opportunity in your hands to ſave a ſoul! to rejoice the angels in heaven! to rejoice Chriſt himſelf! and to increaſe the family of God! There is not a ſinner whoſe caſe you ſhould not ſo far compaſſionate as to be willing to relieve him at a much dearer rate than [by the labour here recommended.]——Can you ſee ſinners as the wounded man by the way, and unmercifully paſs by? Can you hear them cry to you as the man of Macedonia to Paul in his viſion, "Come and help us," and yet refuſe your help? Are you intruſted with an hoſpital, where one languiſhes, and another groans, crying out, "Oh "help me! pity me for the Lord's ſake!" and where a third is raging mad, and would deſtroy himſelf and you, and yet will you ſtill ſit idle?—If it be ſaid of him that relieveth not men's *bodies*, how much more juſtly of him that will not relieve their *ſouls*, 'Whoſo ſeeth his brother have need, 'and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from 'him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' You are not ſuch hard-hearted men—ſuch monſters, but you will pity the naked, the impriſoned, or thoſe that are tormented with grievous pain or

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sickness: and will you not pity a hard-hearted sinner, who must be excluded the presence of the Lord, (if a thorough, speedy repentance prevent it not) and lie under his remediless wrath?—What shall I call the heart of that man who will not pity such a one? The heart of an Infidel! a heart of stone! a very rock or adamant! Surely if he believed the misery of the impenitent, it would be impossible for him not to pity them. Can you tell men, in the pulpit, that they shall certainly be damned except they repent, and yet have no pity on them when you have so proclaimed their danger? And if you do pity them, will you not do thus much for their salvation?

What if you heard sinners cry after you in the streets—"O sir! have pity on me, and afford me your advice! I am afraid of the everlasting wrath of God! I know I must shortly leave this world, and I fear lest I should be miserable in the next!"—What if they came to your study door and cried—"Oh pity us! O help us, lest we should be tormented in the flames of hell"—and would not leave you till you had told them how to escape the wrath of God; could you find in your hearts to drive them away without advice? I am confident you could not. Why such persons, alas! who do not thus cry for help, are the most miserable. The hardened sinner, who cares least for your advice, needs it most. He that has not so much life as to feel

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feel that he is dead, nor ſo much light as to ſee his danger, nor ſo much ſenſe as to pity himſelf, this is the man that is moſt to be pitied. O how can you walk and talk and be merry with ſuch people, when you know their caſe? Methinks when you look them in the face, and think of their future miſery, you ſhould break forth into tears, as the Prophet did when he looked upon Hazael, and then fall on with the moſt importunate exhortations! When you come to viſit them in their laſt ſickneſs, will it not wound your hearts to ſee them ready to depart into miſery, without your having ever dealt ſeriouſly with them for their recovery? O then, for the Lord's ſake, and for the ſake of ſuch poor ſouls, have pity on them! Beſtir yourſelves, and ſpare no pains that may conduce to their ſalvation.

3. Our obligation to this kind of inſtruction appears, both from ſcripture examples and precepts.

We have Chriſt's own example, who uſed this interlocutory preaching both to his diſciples and to the Jews; and we have the examples of the Apoſtles who did the like. Indeed this was their ordinary way of preaching: and when they made a ſpeech of any length, the people and they diſcourſed it out in the concluſion. Thus Peter preached to the Jews; (Acts ii.) and to Cornelius and his friends; (Acts x.) Thus Philip preached to the Eunuch; (Acts ix.) and thus Paul preached to

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the jailer; (Acts xvi.) Thus, as he tells us, he 'preached privately to those of reputation, lest he 'should have run and laboured in vain*'. That earnest charge of his to Timothy, no doubt, includes it: 'I charge thee therefore before God and 'the Lord Jesus Christ, &c. preach the word, be 'instant in season, and out of season; reprove, 'rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doc-'trine†.' [Some other passages to the same purpose were before quoted: vid. p. 40.] But I must further tell you.

4. This ministerial fidelity is necessary to your own welfare, as well as your people's.

You can no more be saved without that fidelity which belongs to you as ministers, than your people can without that which belongs to them as christians. If you care not for others, at least care for yourselves. Oh! what a dreadful thing is it to answer for the neglect of such a charge as ours! What sin more heinous than the betraying of souls! That threatening (so often referred to) is enough surely to make us tremble; 'If thou warn 'not the wicked, &c. their blood will I require at 'thy hands.' I am afraid, nay, I am past doubt, that the day is near, when unfaithful ministers will wish they had never known their charge; but that they had been employed in the meanest occupations, instead of being pastors of Christ's flock;

* Gal. ii. 2. † 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

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when beſides all the reſt of their ſins, they ſhall have the blood of ſo many ſouls to anſwer for. Oh brethren! our death, as well as our people's, is near at hand; and certainly death is as terrible to an unfaithful paſtor as to any. When we ſee that we muſt die, and there is no remedy; that no wit, nor learning, nor popular applauſe, can avert the ſtroke or delay the time; but that, whether willing or unwilling, our ſouls muſt be gone into that world we never ſaw, where our perſons and worldly circumſtances will not be reſpected—Oh! then for a clear conſcience, that can ſay, "I have not lived to myſelf, but to Chriſt; I ſpared not my pains; I hid not my talent; I concealed not men's miſery, nor the way of their recovery; 'I have fought a 'good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept 'the faith; and henceforth there is laid up for me 'a crown of righteouſneſs!" Let us then be diligent in doing good to others and to ourſelves, that we may end our days with this glorious triumph. Let us take time while we may have it; and 'work 'while it is day, for the night cometh wherein no 'man can work.' If you would prepare for a comfortable death, and a glorious reward, 'gird 'up the loins of your minds, and quit yourſelves 'like men.' If you would be 'bleſſed with thoſe 'that die in the Lord,' labour now, that you may 'reſt from your labours' then; and do ſuch works as you would wiſh to 'follow you.'

CHAP. VI.

*Of Church Diſcipline**.

THE next part of our over-ſight is the uſe of CHURCH DISCIPLINE. This conſiſts (after private reproofs, which were conſidered above) of the following particulars:—

I. Publicly reproving offenders.—To conduct this in the moſt uſeful manner theſe things muſt be obſerved.

1. The accuſations of none (not even the beſt in the church) ſhould be taken without proof. A

* N. B. The author, in treating this ſubject, goes on the ſuppoſition that diſcipline is to be extended to all that are in what he calls a church-ſtate, *i. e.* not only thoſe who are admitted to the Lord's table, but thoſe who have acknowledged their relations to the paſtor as his charge, by giving him their names; after having regularly "paſſed from an infant to an adult ſtate, by confirmation;" the nature and the grounds of which rite he has conſidered at large, in a treatiſe called "Confirmation and Reſtauration." See his works, Vol. IV. p. 254.) However, in this Abridgment, what was peculiar to the author's ideas of a church is generally omitted, and this chapter is, for the moſt part, accommodated to any mode of government which chriſtian churches have commonly adopted.

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miniſter ſhould never make himſelf a party, before he has ſufficient evidence of the caſe. It is better to let many vicious perſons go unpuniſhed and without cenſure, when we want full evidence againſt them, than to cenſure one unjuſtly: which we may eaſily do if we go upon bold preſumptions alone: and that will bring upon a paſtor the ſcandal of partiality and unrighteous dealing, which will make all his reproofs and cenſures become contemptible.

2. Let there be therefore a private meeting of choſen perſons (the officers, and ſome delegates of the church on their behalf) to have the hearing of all ſuch caſes, before they are made public. They may meet together once a month, at ſome certain place, that (among other ends) they may be ready to receive what charge ſhall be brought againſt any member of the church; that it may be conſidered whether it be juſt, and that the offender may be dealt with there firſt. If the fault be not of a public heinous nature, and the party ſhall there profeſs repentance, that may ſuffice. But if it be otherwiſe, and the perſon remain impenitent, he muſt 'be reproved before all.'

3. Great caution and prudence muſt be exerciſed in ſuch proceedings, leſt we do more harm than good. But let it be ſuch chriſtian prudence as orders duties aright, and directs them to their proper ends, and not ſuch carnal prudence as ſhall enervate

enervate or exclude them. It may therefore be proper for young miniſters to conſult with others, for the more cautious proceeding in ſuch work.

4. In the performance of it, we ſhould always deal humbly, even when we deal moſt ſharply; that we may make it appear it is not from any lordly diſpoſition, nor an act of revenge, but a neceſſary duty, which we cannot in conſcience avoid. It will therefore be proper publicly to diſclaim all animoſities, and ſhew the people the commands of God obliging us to what we do.

II. With public reproof muſt be joined an exhortation of the perſon to repentance, and to a public profeſſion of it for the ſatisfaction of the church.

As the church is bound to avoid communion with ſcandalous impenitent ſinners, ſo when they have had evidence of their ſin, they muſt alſo ſee ſome evidence of their repentance; for we cannot know them to be penitent without evidence. And what evidence is the church capable of, but their profeſſion of repentance firſt, and their actual reformation afterwards? Both which muſt be expected and demanded of them. Both in our public reproofs and exhortations we ſhould be very cautious of giving offence: in order to avoid which we ſhould proceed in ſome ſuch manner as this:

"Friends and brethren, Sin is ſo evil and dangerous

gerous a thing, that God has commanded us to 'exhort one another daily, leſt any be hardened 'through the deceitfulneſs of it;' and not 'hate 'our brother in our heart, but in any wiſe rebuke 'our neighbour and not ſuffer ſin upon him.' Our Lord exhorts us, "if our brother offend us, to tell 'him of his fault; and if he will not hear us, to 'take two or three' perſons with us to reprove him; 'and if he will not hear them, to tell the 'church; and if he will not hear the church, to 'eſteem him as a heathen or publican.' Thoſe 'that ſin,' we are commanded to 'rebuke before 'all, that others alſo may fear,' and 'if they re-'pent not, to avoid them, and not ſo much as eat 'with them.*' Accordingly, having heard of the ſcandalous practice of M. N. of this church, and having received ſufficient proof that he hath committed the odious ſin of ***. We have ſeriouſly dealt with him in private to bring him to repentance: but to the grief of our hearts perceive that he ſtill remains impenitent, (or lives in the ſame ſin.) We therefore judge it our neceſſary duty to uſe this further remedy which Chriſt hath commanded us to try. And I do earneſtly beſeech him for the ſake of his own ſoul, and require it of him, as a meſſenger of Jeſus Chriſt, as he will anſwer the contrary at the bar of God, to remain no longer

* Lev. xix. 17. Matt. xviii. 15—17. 1 Tim. v. 20. 2 Theſſ. iii. 6, 12, 14. 1 Cor. v. 11, 13.

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ſtout and impenitent, but unfeignedly to confeſs and lament his ſin before God and this congregation. This deſire I here publiſh, not out of any ill will to his perſon, (as the Lord knows) but in obedience to Chriſt, and in love to his ſoul; wiſhing that, if poſſible, he may be ſaved from his ſin, from the power of Satan, and the everlaſting wrath of God; and that he may be ſpeedily reconciled to him, and his church." To this purpoſe ſhould our public admonition proceed: and in ſome caſes, where the ſinner eſteems his ſin to be ſmall, it will be neceſſary to ſet it in its proper light, and eſpecially to quote ſome texts of ſcripture which aggravate and threaten it.

III. To our reproofs and exhortations ſhould be added the Prayers of the church.

We ſhould pray both for thoſe that have been reproved, and thoſe that have been rejected, that they may repent and be reſtored. We are commanded 'to pray always, and in all things; for all 'men, and in all places;' ſo great a buſineſs as this, therefore, ought not to be done without it. We ſhould earneſtly join together in prayer to God, that he would open the ſinner's eyes; that he would ſoften his heart, and ſave him from impenitency and eternal death. That we have not his requeſt or conſent, is no reaſon againſt it; for that is his very

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very diſeaſe, and the malignity of it. If the perſon refuſes to be preſent to receive our admonition, it will be proper to deſire the prayers of the congregation for him. And let us be very earneſt in our prayers, that the congregation may be excited to join with us. Who knows but God may hear ſuch prayers, and that they may be more effectual than our exhortations? However, the people will thereby perceive that we did not make light of ſin, and that we do not preach to them in mere cuſtom or form.——When the ſinner is thus admoniſhed and prayed for, if it pleaſe the Lord to open his eyes and give him repentance, our next duty is,

IV. To proceed for his full recovery: where theſe things muſt be obſerved,

We muſt not diſcourage him by too much ſeverity, nor yet by too much haſte and lenity palliate the offence, and ſink the ideas of diſcipline. We muſt urge him to be ſerious in his humiliation, till he be truly ſenſible of his ſin; for it is not a vain formality that we are to expect, but the recovering and ſaving of the ſoul.——We ſhould endeavour to bring him to beg the communion and prayers of the church; and to promiſe that he will moſt carefully avoid the ſin into which he has fallen, for the time to come. After this we muſt tell him of

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of the riches of God's love, and the ſufficiency of Chriſt's blood, for the pardon of his ſin; and acquaint him that we are authorized, as the meſſengers of the Lord, to aſſure him that, if his repentance be ſincere, he is pardoned.—We ſhould then charge him to perſevere, and perform his promiſes; to avoid temptations, and continue begging mercy and ſtrengthening grace.—Hereupon we ſhould exhort the church, that they imitate Chriſt in forgiving, and that they retain the perſon in (or receive him again into) communion; that they never reproach him with his ſin, but forgive and forget as Chriſt does. We have no warrant to rip up old matters, or ſo make that public again which has ceaſed to be ſo.—After this we ſhould give God thanks for the offender's recovery ſo far, and pray for his confirmation and future preſervation.—The next part of diſcipline is

V. Rejecting from the churches communion thoſe who, after ſufficient trial, remain impenitent.

Excluſion from church communion is of divers kinds and degrees, of which I ſhall not here treat. That which is moſt commonly to be practiſed among us, is only to forbid an offender communion with us, or to inflict a temporary excluſion, called ſuſpenſion, till it ſhall pleaſe the Lord to give him repentance

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repentance [or till he ſhall diſcover very evident marks of impenitence.] We have, indeed, no expreſs directions in ſcripture how long we ſhould ſtay to try whether the ſinner be ſo impenitent as to be neceſſarily and entirely excluded; we muſt therefore follow the general directions, with ſuch diverſity as the caſe and character of the perſon, and former proceeding ſhall require; this being left to the diſcretion of the church, who muſt always continue to pray for, and exerciſe patience towards the offender, till he manifeſt himſelf obſtinate in his ſin. Where a perſon has openly ſinned but once or twice, a profeſſion of repentance may ſuffice; but if he be accuſtomed to ſin, and has often broken his promiſes of amendment, then we muſt require an actual reformation. He that will refuſe either to reform, or to make a profeſſion of repentance, muſt be conſidered as living in the ſin; for a heinous ſin, but once committed, is morally continued in till it be repented of; and a mere forbearing of the act is not ſufficient.—[If the church, after having waited a proper time, cannot diſcern in the perſon any ſigns of genuine repentance,] they muſt then proceed to excommunication. The miniſter muſt pronounce him unworthy of communion, and authoritatively charge the people in the name of the Lord, to avoid communion with ſuch a perſon; and muſt deny him thoſe ordinances and privileges which do not belong to him. And as far as this act

act of the paſtor is not contrary to the word of God, the people are in duty bound to fall in with it.——However, it will be proper to pray for the repentance and reſtoration even of the excommunicate; and, if God ſhould give them repentance, they are gladly to be received into the communion of the church again.—So much for the nature of church-diſcipline: and ſure I am, if well underſtood, much of the paſtoral work and authority conſiſts in it.

There are many, I know, who would ſet open the doors of the church, would pluck up the hedge, and lay the vineyard common to the wilderneſs. Nay, (which is very amazing) ſome who are eſteemed godly divines, reproach, as a ſect, thoſe faithful paſtors who will not give the ſacrament to all the pariſh, and who maintain diſcipline in their churches, under the name of Sacramentarians and Diſciplinarians; as the impure uſed to reproach the godly by the name of Puritans. But was not Chriſt himſelf the leader of theſe Diſciplinarians? He inſtituted diſcipline, and commanded the particular acts of it, [as hath already been proved, from Matt. xviii. See p. 111.] Chriſt made his miniſters the rulers of his church, and put the keys of the kingdom into their hands; and he requires the people to 'ſubmit to them, and obey them in the 'Lord.' *Heb.* xiii. 17.

Agreeable to theſe ſcriptures, was the practice of the

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the ancient church for many years after Chriſt; in which diſcipline was exerciſed much more vigorouſly than among any of us, even in the heat of heathen perſecutions, as well as under chriſtian magiſtrates, till ſelfiſhneſs and formality cauſed them to be remiſs in this and other duties together; as may be ſeen in the ancient canons and *Cyprian's* epiſtles. Diſcipline was not then taken to be a uſeleſs thing*; nor would it appear ſuch now, if it were ſhewed in its ſtrength and beauty, by a vigorous practice.——I know that when the church began to be tainted with vain inventions, the word *Diſcipline* changed its ſignification for various of their own rules of life, and auſtere impoſitions; but it is for the ancient and truly chriſtian diſcipline alone that I am contending. There is no room to doubt whether this be our duty, nor whether we are unfaithful as to the performance of it. It is certainly no leſs our duty becauſe our brethren of late have made ſo little conſcience of it.——And what are the hinderances that now keep the miniſters of England from the diſcharge of it?

1. Some object "That we ſhall be guilty of

* Diſcipline eſt cuſtos ſpei, retinaculum fidei, dux itineris ſalutaris, fomes ac nutrimentum bonæ indolis, magiſtra virtutus; facit in Chriſto manere ſemper, ac jugitor Deo vivere, ad promiſſa cœleſtia et divina præmia pervenire: Hanc et ſectari ſalubre eſt, et adverſari ac negligere lethale. *Cypr.* de Diſcip. p. 265. See *Calvin's* Inſtit. Lib. IV. cap. 12. § 1, 2.

"defaming

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" defaming men, by thus publiſhing their crimes." I anſwer in the words of *Bernard*, " Cum car-
" puntur vitia, et inde ſcandalum oritur, ipſi ſibi
" ſcandali cauſa eſt, qui fecit quod argui debet;
" non ille qui arguit. Non ergo timeas contra
" charitatem eſſe, ſi unius ſcandalum multorum
" recompenſaveris pace. Melius eſt enim ut pe-
" reat unus quam uniras." *Bernard ſup. Cantic.* Many of us who would be aſhamed to omit preaching or praying half ſo much, have not conſidered what we do in wilfully neglecting this duty. We draw down the guilt of men's crimes upon our own heads, when we do not uſe God's means for the cure of them*.

2. Others will ſay " There is little likelihood that public perſonal reprehenſion ſhould do any good to offenders, becauſe they will be but enraged by the ſhame." I anſwer in the words of *Philo* a Jew, " We muſt endeavour as far as we are able
" to ſave thoſe from their ſins who will certainly
" periſh by them; imitating good phyſicians, who
" when they cannot ſave a ſick man, do yet wil-
" lingly try all means for cure, leſt they ſeem to
" want ſucceſs through their own negligence†." I further anſwer, It ill becomes the ignorant crea-

* Qui non corrigit reſecanda committit. GREG.
Si quid me ſcis feciſſe incite aut improbe, ſi id non accuſas, tu ipſe objurgandus es. PLAUT.

† Philo de ſacrif. Abel et Cain.

ture

ture to implead the ordinances of God as uſeleſs. God can render his own ordinances ſucceſsful, or elſe he would never have appointed them. Beſides, church-diſcipline ſeems to be well calculated for uſefulneſs. It tends to the ſhaming of ſin, and the humbling of the ſinner; to manifeſt the holineſs of Chriſt, of his doctrine, and his church before all the world.—What method ſhould be taken with offenders if not this? Muſt they be given up as hopeleſs? That were cruel: and other means are ſuppoſed to have been uſed without ſucceſs.—— The church of Chriſt has found this method to be ſucceſsful, even in times of perſecution, when, if ever, carnal reaſon would have told them to forbear it, for fear of driving away their converts.—But beſides all that has been ſaid, let it be remembered, that the principal uſe of this public diſcipline, is not for the offender himſelf, but for the church. It tends greatly to deter others from the like crimes, and ſo to keep our churches and worſhip pure*.

3. Some will ſay, "That this method will but reſtrain men as hypocrites and not convert them." I anſwer, Who knows how God may bleſs his ordinances? It is true repentance to which offenders are exhorted, and which they profeſs: whether they *truly* profeſs it or not, who can tell but God?

* Vitia tranſmittit ad poſteros, qui præſentibus culpis ignoſcit,—Bonis nocet qui malis parcit. SENECA.

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However if it only restrains persons, that is a benefit not to be contemned. It is of some importance that sin be disgraced; and so far the church acquit themselves. But the grand objection against discipline, as far as I can learn, is

4. The difficulty of the work, and the trouble or suffering you are likely to bring upon yourselves by it. "We cannot, say you, publicly reprehend one sinner, but he will highly resent it, and bear us malice for it. We can prevail with very few to make a public profession of repentance; and if we excommunicate them, that will enrage them the more. If we were to deal with all the obstinate sinners in the parish, in the manner you advise, it would be dangerous living among them: or we should be so hated, that our labours would become quite unprofitable to them. Duty therefore ceases to be duty, because the hurt that would follow would be greater than the good."—But are not these reasons as valid against professing and defending Christianity in some times and places, as *now* against discipline? Christ has told us 'that he 'came not to send peace?' and that 'the world will 'hate us.'—Many of his servants have met with more difficulty in doing their duty than we can expect; which yet did not prevent their faithful discharge of it. If we did our duty faithfully as ministers, we should now find much the same lot among professed christians, as our predecessors did among infidels.

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infidels.—But if you cannot ſuffer for Chriſt, why did you 'put your hands to his plough?' You ought 'firſt to have ſat down and counted the 'coſt.' This makes the miniſterial work ſo unfaithfully done, becauſe it is ſo carnally undertaken. Many enter upon it as a life of eaſe and honour from men, and therefore they reſolve to attain their ends, whether right or wrong.—As for your making yourſelves incapable of doing men any good, if you thus publicly admoniſh them; I anſwer, that reaſon is as valid againſt plain preaching, or private reproof, or any other duty for which wicked men will hate us. God will bleſs his own ordinances to do good, or elſe he would not have appointed them. By this means good may poſſibly be done to the offender, and even to the excommunicate. I am ſure it is God's means; and the laſt means we can uſe; it were therefore perverſe to neglect it. However, other perſons, both within and without the church, may receive good by it, though the offender himſelf receive none: and God will certainly have the honour when his church is thus manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from the world. But let me tell you, there is not ſuch 'a lion in the 'way,' as you may imagine; nor is diſcipline ſo uſeleſs a thing. I bleſs God, upon the ſmall, and too late, trial I have made of it myſelf, I can ſay by experience it is not vain; nor are the hazards

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of it ſuch as may excuſe our neglect.—To the laſt objection many have added,

5. "That it is a vain thing to attempt the uſe of diſcipline in the church, unleſs it were eſtabliſhed by ſecular power, and all the people were forced, under a penalty, to ſubmit to it; whereas every man has liberty to deſpiſe our cenſures, and to abſent himſelf when he ſhould appear before the church."—Here let me aſk, How did the church of Chriſt ſubſiſt before the days of *Conſtantine*, without the help of the civil magiſtrate? And how was diſcipline exerciſed for three hundred years together, when the prince did not ſo much as give protection or toleration to chriſtians, but even perſecuted them to death? Yet then was the church in its beſt ſtate, and its diſcipline the moſt pure and powerful. Are the keys of Chriſt's church ſo unfit and uſeleſs, that they will not open and ſhut without the magiſtrate's help! If they have contracted any ruſt, we may thank ourſelves, who have let them lie ſo long without uſe. But let me add, that the interpoſition of the civil magiſtrate with our diſcipline, would do more hurt than good: it would but corrupt it by the mixture, and make it become a mere human thing. Your government is all to work upon the Conſcience; and the ſword cannot reach that. It is not a deſirable thing to have repentance ſo obſcured by mere forced confeſſions, that you

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you cannot know when perſons mean as they ſpeak. I confeſs, if the civil power had forced men to thoſe public confeſſions of ſin and profeſſions of repentance, to which I have perſuaded them by the light of God's word, it would have left me, and I believe the church too, very much diſſatisfied with them; imagining they only complied becauſe they were compelled.—I am the leſs ſorry that the magiſtrate doth not interpoſe, on account of that blind zeal which ſo much prevails amongſt us. Perſons of every party lay ſuch a ſtreſs upon many opinions of their own, as if life or death depended upon them; making ſuch a great outcry againſt whatever are called errors by their own ſect, without knowing what they are, that if the ſword were in ſuch envious, angry hands, there would be little quiet to the church. This may poſſibly make the magiſtrate think fit to let us fight it out with our naked fiſts, and not to put ſwords into our hands till we know better how to uſe them. As long as he does not prevent our exerciſing that kind of diſcipline which has now been recommended, I fear not but, by the bleſſing of God, a prudent, reſolute, unanimous miniſtry will, in general, be able to bring perſons to ſubmit to it, ſo as to anſwer very important purpoſes.

I ſhall conclude this ſubject with earneſtly requeſting my brethren in the miniſtry ſpeedily and faithfully to put in execution all the unqueſtionable

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part of the diſcipline for which I have been contending.

1. Conſider how ſinful the neglect of it is, and how dangerous with reſpect to yourſelves. It is indeed a ſad caſe that good men, under ſo much liberty, ſhould ſatisfy themſelves ſo long in the neglect of ſo great a duty. It is, I own, a troubleſome and painful work, and calls for ſome ſelf-denial, as it will expoſe us to the diſpleaſure of the wicked. But dare we prefer our carnal eaſe, or the love of wicked men, before our duty to Chriſt our maſter? Can ſuch ſlothful ſervants look for a good reward?

2. The neglect of diſcipline has a ſtrong tendency to the deluding of ſouls; by making men think that they are chriſtians when they are not, becauſe they are not ſeparated from ſuch as are; and by making ſcandalous ſinners think their ſin tolerable becauſe it is ſo tolerated by the paſtors of the church. We hereby corrupt Chriſtianity itſelf in the eyes of the world, and do our part to make them believe, that to be a chriſtian is only to be of ſuch or ſuch an opinion, and that the chriſtian religion requires holineſs no more than the falſe religions of the world.

3. By the neglect of diſcipline you encourage ſeparation. If you will not by this means diſtinguiſh between 'the precious and the vile,' the people will do it by withdrawing from you; which many

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many honeſt chriſtians will think they are neceſſitated to do. Nor can you wonder, if you keep a number of ſcandalous ſinners in your churches, that ſome timorous ſouls ſhould run out of them, as out of an edifice which they apprehend ready to fall. I have known many who have ſeparated merely on this account.

4. By this neglect we do much to bring the wrath of God upon ourſelves and our congregation, and ſo to blaſt the fruit of our labours. If 'the angel of the church of *Thyatira*,' was reproved for ſuffering ſeducers in it, and thoſe who joined with them were ſo ſeverely threatened, ſurely we deſerve reproof on the ſame ground, for ſuffering open, ſcandalous, impenitent ſinners among us, and have reaſon to fear the execution of this threatening upon our churches.

But againſt all that I have ſaid in behalf of diſcipline you will plead, "Our people are not ready for it: they will not yet bear it." But is not the meaning of this, that YOU will not bear the trouble and hatred which it will occaſion? I beſeech you, in order that you may make a comfortable account to the chief ſhepherd, and that you may not be found unfaithful in the houſe of God, that you do not ſhrink from duty becauſe of the trouble that may attend it. Remember for your encouragement, that the moſt coſtly duties are uſually the moſt comfortable; and you may be ſure that Chriſt will bear the coſt.

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CHAP. VII.

Of the MOTIVES *to Paſtoral Fidelity in general.*

HAVING pointed out and recommended the ſeveral pars of the miniſterial office, we proceed to conſider the MOTIVES to a diligent performance of them. The Lord grant that they may work upon us all according to their truth and importance!

I. The nature of our Office obliges us to take heed to all the flock: we are ſtyled OVERSEERS.

And for what elſe are we overſeers*? To be a biſhop or paſtor is not to be ſet up as an idol for the people to bow to; or to be (what the apoſtle calls the Cretians) 'evil beaſts, ſlow bellies;' to live to our fleſhly delight and eaſe; but it is to be the guide of ſinners to ſalvation. It is a ſad thing that men ſhould undertake a calling of which they know not the nature. Do thoſe perſons know and conſider what they have undertaken, who live in eaſe and pleaſure? who have time to take their ſuperfluous recreations, and ſpend it in loitering, or in vain diſcourſes, when ſo much work lies upon their hands? Brethren, do you conſider where you

* Epiſcopus eſt nomen quod plus oneris quam honoris ſignificat. Polyd. Virg. p. 240.

ſtand,

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ſtand, and what you have taken upon you? You have, under Chriſt, undertaken a band of his ſoldiers 'againſt principalities and powers, and ſpiri-'tual wickedneſſes in high places.' You muſt lead them on in the ſharpeſt conflicts; you muſt acquaint them with the enemy's ſtratagems and aſſaults; you muſt watch yourſelves, and keep them watching. If you miſcarry, they and you may periſh. You have a ſubtile enemy; and therefore you muſt be wiſe: you have a vigilant enemy, therefore you muſt be vigilant: you have a malicious, violent, and unwearied enemy; and therefore you muſt be reſolute, courageous, and unwearied. You are in a crowd of enemies, encompaſſed with them on every ſide; ſo that if you do not take particular heed to every one of them, you will quickly fall.

Oh! what a world of Work have you to do! Had you but *one* ignorant perſon to teach, though willing to learn, what an arduous taſk would it be! How much more if that perſon were as unwilling as ignorant! But to have ſuch multitudes of theſe as moſt of us have, will find us work indeed! How much wickedneſs have we ſometimes to contend againſt in one ſoul! and what a number of ſuch wicked perſons have we to deal with! What deep rooting have their ſins taken, and under what diſadvantage muſt truth come to them! What ſtrangers are they to the heavenly meſſage we bring them! They frequently know not what you

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ſay, though you ſpeak to them in the plaineſt language. And when you think you have done them ſome good, you leave your ſeed among the 'fowls 'of the air.' Wicked men are at hand to contradict all that you have ſaid; who will cavil at and ſlander you that they may diſgrace your meſſage, and that they may deride and ſcorn them away from Chriſt: thus they quickly extinguiſh the good beginnings which you hoped you had ſeen. They uſe indeed weaker reaſons than yours; but ſuch as come with more advantage, being taken from things which they ſee and feel, and which are befriended by the fleſh. Beſides, they are more familiarly and importunately urged. You ſpeak but once to a ſinner for ten or twenty times that the meſſengers of Satan do. Moreover, how eaſily do the 'cares 'and buſineſſes of the world choke and devour the 'ſeed,' which you had ſown, and how eaſily will a frozen carnal heart, though it had no external enemies, extinguiſh thoſe ſparks which you have been long in kindling! Yea, for want of fuel and further help, they will go out of themſelves. Among what abundance of diſtempers, luſts, and paſſions do you caſt your words, where they are likely to meet with but a poor entertainment! And when you think your work doth happily ſucceed, ſeeing men under trouble, confeſſing their ſins, promiſing reformation, and living as new creatures and zealous converts, they will often prove unſound; to have been but ſuperficially changed; to have taken

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up new opinions, and new company, without a new heart. O how many persons, after some considerable change has taken place, are deceived by the profits, the honours, or the pleasures of the world, and 'again entangled in their former lusts!' Nay, how soon do even the graces of the saints themselves languish, if you neglect them; and how easily are they drawn into shameful ways, to the dishonour of the gospel, as well as their own loss and sorrow! O brethren, what a field of labour is before us! there is not a person you can see, but may find you work!—Exert yourselves then with all your might. In order to quicken you the more let me beg you to attend to the following considerations.

1. Consider the office of an *overseer* was your own voluntary undertaking. No man is forced to be an overseer of the church: does not common honesty then require you to be true to your trust?

2. Consider the *honour* connected with your office, as an encouragement to labour. A great honour indeed it is, to be the 'ambassadors of God,' and the instruments of men's conversion and salvation; to 'save souls from death and cover a multitude of sins.' For ministers to strive for precedency, and fill the world with wide contentions about the dignity and superiority of their office, shews that they forget the nature and work of that office they strive about. The honour is but the

appendix to the work. If miniſters would faithfully and humbly lay out themſelves for Chriſt and his church, without thinking of titles and reputation, they would have honour whether they would or not; whereas by gaping after it they loſe it.

3. Conſider that you have many *privileges* belonging to your office, which ſhould engage you to diligence in it. It is no ſmall thing that you are maintained by other men's labours. This is for your work, that you may not be taken off from it, but that you may 'give yourſelves wholly to theſe 'things,' and not be forced to neglect men's ſouls, while you are providing for your own bodies. Either do the work, or take not the maintenance. Beſides, it ought to be conſidered as a great privilege to be bred up to learning, while many others are brought up at the plough and cart; to be furniſhed with ſo much delightful knowledge, when the world lies in ignorance; and to converſe with learned men about ſublime and glorious things, while many others are converſant with none but the moſt vulgar and illiterate. Eſpecially think what an excellent privilege is it, to live in ſtudying and preaching Chriſt! to be continually ſearching into his myſteries, or feeding on them! to be daily employed in contemplating the bleſſed nature, works, and ways of God! Others are glad of the leiſure of the Lord's day, and now and then an hour beſides, when they can lay hold of it; but we may

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may keep a continnal Sabbath. We may almoſt do nothing elſe but ſtudy and talk of God and glory; engage in acts of prayer and praiſe, and drink in ſacred and ſaving truths. Our employment is all ſublime and ſpiritual. Whether we are alone, or in company, our buſineſs is for another world. O that our hearts were but more diſpoſed for this work! what a bleſſed joyful life ſhould we then live! How ſweet would the ſtudy be to us! how pleaſant the pulpit! and what delight would our conferences yield! What excellent helps do our libraries afford; where we have ſuch a variety of wiſe ſilent companions, whenever we pleaſe! Surely all theſe, and more ſuch privileges attending the miniſtry, beſpeak our unwearied diligence in the work. Once more,

4. Conſider the intereſt which all the faithful ſervants of Chriſt have in their maſter's regards. You are related to Chriſt as well as to the flock, and he is related to you. If therefore you are faithful in your work, you are not only advanced, but ſecured by the relation. You are 'the ſtewards of his myſteries,' and the rulers of his houſehold: and he that intruſted you with his work will maintain you in it. But then 'it is required of a 'ſteward that a man be found faithful.' Be true to him, and never doubt of his being true to you. Do you feed his flock? He will ſooner feed you as he did *Elijah*, than forſake you. In the midſt of

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enemies, he will 'give you a tongue and wiſdom 'which none ſhall reſiſt.' If you willingly put your hand to his plough, he will wither the hand that is ſtretched out againſt you. His faithful mininiſters have always had large experience of his care. He who knows that he ſerves a God who will never ſuffer any man to be a loſer by him, needs not fear what hazards he runs in his cauſe: and he who knows that he is ſeeking a prize which, if obtained, will infinitely exceed his coſt, may boldly engage his whole eſtate on it, and ſell all he has to purchaſe ſo rich a pearl. The next

II. Motive to fidelity, is taken from the Perſon by whom miniſters are inveſted with their office:—'the flock over which the HOLY GHOST 'hath made you overſeers.'

This divine agent is ſaid to make biſhops or paſtors, not merely becauſe he has determined in his word that there ſhall be ſuch an office—what the work and power ſhall be—and what ſort of perſons ſhall receive it; but alſo becauſe he qualifies men for the office; directs thoſe that ordain them to diſcern their qualifications; and directs them and the people themſelves, in fixing them over a particular charge. Theſe were done in the firſt ages of chriſtianity, in an extraordinary manner by inſpiration. But, when men are rightly called, they

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they are now as well as then, made overſeers of the church by the Holy Ghoſt, *i. e.* by the ordinary influences of the ſame Spirit. What an obligation then is laid upon us by our call! If our commiſſion be from heaven, it is not to be diſobeyed. When *Paul* was called by the voice of Chriſt to preach the goſpel, he 'was not diſobient to the 'heavenly viſion.' When the apoſtles were called by our Lord, from their ſecular employments, they immediately left their friends and houſes, and trade, and all, and followed him. Though our call be not ſo immediate or extraordinary, it is from the ſame Spirit, and therefore ought to be as readily obeyed. It is not a ſafe courſe to imitate *Jonah*, in turning our backs upon the commands of God. If we neglect our work, he has a ſpur to quicken us. If we run from it, he has meſſengers enow to overtake us, to bring us back and make us do it; and certainly it is better to do it at firſt than at laſt. Another motive is

III. What is derived from the dignity of the Object, *viz.* 'the Church of GOD.'

It is that church for which the world is upheld; which is ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt; which is united to Chriſt; and which is his myſtical body. That church with which angels are preſent; and on which they attend as 'miniſtering ſpirits;' whoſe very

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very 'little ones have their angels beholding the 'face of God in heaven.' O what a charge is it that we have undertaken! And ſhall we be unfaithful to it? Have we the ſtewardſhip of God's own family, and ſhall we neglect it? Have we the conduct of thoſe ſaints who are to live for ever with God in glory, and ſhall we omit our duty to them? God forbid! Are the ſouls of men thought meet by God to ſee his face, and live for ever in his preſence? and are they not worthy of your utmoſt coſt and labour? Do not think ſo meanly of the church of God, as if it deſerved not your higheſt regards. Were you the keepers of ſwine or ſheep, you would ſcarcely let them go, and ſay they were not worth looking after; eſpecially if they were your own: dare you then neglect the ſouls of men, even the church of GOD?—Remember Chriſt 'walks among them: the praiſes of the moſt high 'God are in the midſt of them. They are a choſen 'generation; a ſanctified, peculiar people; a royal 'prieſthood, an holy nation; to ſhew forth the 'praiſes of him that called them.' What an honour is it to be one of them, though but a 'door-'keeper in the houſe of the Lord!' Surely then to be the Prieſt of theſe prieſts, and the Ruler of theſe kings, is ſuch an honour, ſuch a noble employment, as multiplies your obligations to diligence and fidelity.

IV. The

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IV. The laſt motive to take heed to the flock, and feed the church of God, is, the PRICE that was paid for it.

It is ſpoken of as 'purchaſed by HIS OWN BLOOD:' *i. e.* by the blood of CHRIST, who is here expreſsly called GOD. God the Son did purchaſe the church with his own blood. What an argument is here to quicken the negligent, and to condemn thoſe that will not be quickened! What! ſhall we deſpiſe the blood of Chriſt? Shall we think it was ſhed for ſuch as are not worthy our care? The guilt of negligent paſtors is certainly great, ſince, as much as in them lies, they make the blood of Chriſt to be ſhed in vain. They would loſe him thoſe ſouls, whom he has ſo dearly bought. Whenever we feel ourſelves grow dull and careleſs, let us imagine we heard the bleſſed Saviour arguing with us to this effect: "Did I die for thoſe ſouls, and wilt not thou look after them? Were they worth my blood, and are they not worth my care? Did I come down from heaven to earth 'to ſeek and to ſave them that were 'loſt,' and wilt thou not go to the next door or ſtreet or village to ſeek them? How ſmall is thy labour or condeſcenſion in compariſon with mine? I debaſed myſelf to this; but it is thy honour to be ſo employed. Have I done and ſuffered ſo much for the ſalvation of men, and was I willing to make thee

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thee a co-worker with me, and wilt thou refuſe the little that lies upon thy hands?"

Every time we look upon our congregations, let us remember that they are purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt, and regard them accordingly. Let us often think in what confuſion a negligent miniſter will be at the laſt day, to have the blood of the ſon of God pleaded againſt him; and to hear Chriſt ſay "Thou didſt make light of the purchaſe of my blood; and canſt thou now hope to be ſaved by it thyſelf?"—O brethren! ſince Chriſt will bring his blood to plead [at God's righteous bar] let it now effectually plead with us to do our duty, leſt it ſhould then plead againſt us to our damnation!

CHAP. VIII.

Of the OBJECTIONS *to this courſe of miniſterial Duty, particularly perſonal Inſtruction.*

IT is a hard caſe that ſo good a maſter as ours, in ſo good a work, ſhould have ſervants ſo bad as to plead againſt their duty when they ſhould practiſe it; eſpecially that *good* men ſhould be ſo backward to it as to need many words to excite them to the diligent performance of it. Yet alas! this is too common a caſe. I have no great fear of oppoſition from conſcience, or unbiaſſed reaſon; but

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but only from unwillingneſs, and from reaſon biaſſed by the fleſh. To what has been ſaid about perſonal inſtruction ſome will object,

I. "That their congregations are ſo large that it is impoſſible for them to know all their hearers; much more to take heed to every individual.

But let me aſk ſuch perſons—Was it neceſſary for you to take upon you ſuch a charge? If not, how durſt you undertake what you knew yourſelves unable to perform? If it was in a manner neceſſary, might you not have procured ſome aſſiſtance? Have you not, or could not you get a maintenance ſufficient for yourſelves and another to help you? What though it would not ſupport you in affluence, is it not more reaſonable that you ſhould pinch your fleſh and families, than neglect the ſouls of ſo many of your flock? With me it is unqueſtionable, that it is your duty, if you can, to live upon part of your ſalary, and allow the reſt to a competent aſſiſtant. Do not many families in your pariſh live on leſs than you would then have! Have not many able miniſters been glad of leſs, with liberty to preach the goſpel? Can your pariſhioners endure damnation better than you can poverty? What do you call yourſelves miniſters of the goſpel, and yet eſteem the ſouls of men ſo little, as that you had rather they ſhould eternally periſh, than

than that you and your families ſhould live in a low condition? If you have but 'food and rai-'ment,' you ought 'therewith to be content.' Would you have more than is ſufficient to enable you for the work of God? 'A man's life conſiſt-'eth not in the abundance of things which he poſ-'ſeſſes.' If your clothing be warm, and your food wholeſome, you may be as well ſupported to do God's work, as if you enjoyed the greateſt af-fluence. He that has theſe, has but a poor excuſe for hazarding men's ſouls, that he may enjoy more of this world's good. Remember how ſtrongly our bleſſed maſter recommends ſelf-denial to all his ſervants. They that will not exerciſe it, are ſo far from being his miniſters, that they are not his true diſciples.—If your circumſtances are ſuch that proper aſſiſtance cannot be procured, then you ſhould undertake your charge with limitation. But do not omit the work of perſonal overſight entire-ly, becauſe you cannot do it with all: take this courſe with as many as you are able, and put your godly neighbours, eſpecially parents and maſters of families, upon doing the more.

II. Some may object that "The courſe recom-mended will require too much time, and will not allow ſo much as is neceſſary for miniſters (young men eſpecially) to follow their ſtudies, and im-prove their own abilities."

I anſwer;

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I anſwer; the perſons whom I am perſuading to this work, are ſuppoſed to underſtand the ſubſtance of the chriſtian religion, and to be able to teach others: and the addition of leſs neceſſary things, is not to be preferred to the communication of what are fundamentally neceſſary. I highly value common knowledge, and would not encourage any to ſet light by it; but I value the ſaving of ſouls more. That which is immediately neceſſary ought to be done whatever elſe is left undone. It is a very deſirable thing for a phyſician to be well ſtudied in his art; but if he would be inquiring even into the moſt uſeful ſubjects when he ſhould be looking to his patients; and ſhould tell them that he has not time to give them advice, becauſe he muſt follow his own ſtudies, I ſhould eſteem that man a prepoſterous ſtudent, who thus preferred the means to the very end itſelf. Indeed I ſhould think ſuch a phyſician to be but a civil kind of a murderer.—Men's ſouls may be ſaved without your knowing [many of thoſe things which have been the ſubject of ſcholaſtic debates.] Get well to Heaven, and help your people thither, and you ſhall know all theſe things in a moment, and a thouſand more, of which now, by all your ſtudies, you cannot gain a certain knowledge.

Conſider further, if by the diligent practice of miniſterial duties, you are prevented acquiring an extenſive knowledge, you will hereby improve more

more in that which is moſt excellent. If you know not ſo many things as others, you will know the moſt important matters better than they. And a little of this kind of knowledge, is worth all the other knowledge in the world. When I am looking heaven-ward, gazing towards the inacceſſible light, and aſpiring after the knowledge of God, and find my ſoul ſo dark and diſtant, and conſider how little I know of God, and how much he is out of my reach, I find this the moſt killing and grievous ignorance. Methinks I could willingly exchange all the other knowledge I have, for one glimpſe more of God and the life to come. Now by frequent ſerious converſation about everlaſting things, by diligently inſtructing and catechiſing your people, you will gain more of this kind of knowledge, than can be gained by any other means; and thus you will really grow wiſer than thoſe that ſpend their time in any other way whatever. As Theology is a practical ſcience, the knowledge of it thrives beſt in a practical courſe. Laying out here, is a means of gathering in; an hearty endeavour to communicate and do good is one of the greateſt helps to our own proficiency. So that by this means you are likely to become more able paſtors of the church, than private ſtudies alone can make you. Particularly it will be an excellent means to help you in preaching; for when you are well acquainted with your people's caſes, you will know what to preach upon.

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upon. An hour's converſation will furniſh you with as much matter as an hour's ſtudy. As he will be the beſt phyſician and lawyer, ſo he alſo will be the beſt divine, who adds practice and experience proportionable to his ſtudies; whereas that man will prove a uſeleſs drone, who refuſes God's ſervice all his life, under a pretence of preparing for it; and lets men's ſouls paſs on to perdition, while he pretends to be ſtudying how to recover them, or getting more ability to help and ſave them.

However let me add, that though I eſteem religious knowledge the chief, I would have you to acquire other knowledge too. The other ſciences may be very uſeful, and indeed ſubſervient to this: and you may have competent time for both. Loſe none upon vain recreations and amuſements; trifle not away a minute; conſume none in needleſs ſleep; do what you do with all your might; and then ſee what time you may command. If you ſet apart two days in a week for the work of perſonal inſtruction, you may find time enough for your common ſtudies out of all the reſt. Duties are to be taken together: none are to be neglected that can be performed, but the greateſt ſhould always be preferred. But if there were ſuch a caſe of neceſſity, that we could not read or ſtudy for ourſelves, and inſtruct the ignorant too, I would throw by all the libraries in the world rather than be guilty of

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of the perdition of one ſoul: at leaſt I know that this would be my duty.

III. It will be objected by many, "This courſe will deſtroy our health, by continually ſpending our ſpirits, without allowing time for neceſſary recreations."

I anſwer, we may do our duty, and have time for neceſſary recreations too. An hour or half an hour's walk before meat, is as much recreation as is neceſſary for the weaker ſort of ſtudents. I have reaſon to know ſomething of this by long experience. Though I have a body which has languiſhed under great weakneſſes many years, and which requires me to take as much exerciſe as almoſt any perſon in the world, yet I have found the above proportion ſufficient. It is undoubtedly our duty to uſe as much exerciſe as is neceſſary for the preſervation of our health; ſo far our work requires it: otherwiſe, for one day's work we ſhould loſe the opportunity of many; and this may be done very conſiſtently with all the duties I have been recommending.

As for thoſe men that limit not their recreations to ſtated hours; who muſt have them, not to fit them for their work, but to pleaſe their voluptuous humour, ſuch ſenſualiſts have need to ſtudy the nature

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ture of christianity better; to learn the danger of 'living after the flesh,' and to get more mortification and self-denial before they preach to others. If you must have your pleasures, you should not have put yourselves into a calling which requires you to make God and his service your pleasure, and which restrains you so much from carnal gratifications. Do you not know that the christian warfare consisteth in the combat between the flesh and the spirit? That the very difference between a christian and a wicked man is, that the one 'lives after the 'spirit, mortifying the deeds of the body,' and the other 'lives after the flesh?' and that to overcome the flesh is the principal part of that victory, on which the crown of life depends? If notwithstanding this you must have your pleasures, then for shame give over preaching of the gospel and the profession of christianity, and profess yourselves to be what you are; for as you 'sow to the flesh, so 'of the flesh shall you receive the wages of cor-'ruption.' Does such an one as *Paul* say, 'I 'keep under my body and bring it into subjection 'lest, that by any means, when I have preached 'to others, I myself should be cast away?' And have not such sinners as we are need to do the same? And have not we much more cause to fear being cast away?—Some recreation is undoubtedly lawful, namely such as tends to fit us for our work. But for a man to be so far in love with his pleasures

ſures as, for the ſake of them to waſte his precious time, and neglect the work of God for men's ſalvation, (eſpecially to plead for this as neceſſary) is a degree of wickedneſs inconſiſtent with the fidelity of a common chriſtian; much more with that of a chriſtian Miniſter. Such wretches as are 'lovers 'of pleaſure more than lovers of God,' are more fit to be caſt out of chriſtian communion, than to be the chief in the church: 'from ſuch' we are commanded 'to turn away.'

Recreations for a ſtudent, muſt be eſpecially for the exerciſe of his Body, ſince he has continually before him a variety of delights to the Mind: and they muſt be uſed, as whetting is by the Mower, only as far as is neceſſary to his work.

Let it be further conſidered; The buſineſs I am recommending is not of ſuch a nature as is likely much to impair our health. It is true, it muſt be ſerious; but it will not ſo much ſpend our ſpirits, as excite and revive them. Men can talk all the day long about other matters, without any prejudice to their health: why then may not we talk with men about their ſalvation without any great detriment to ours? I only mean on the ſuppoſition that we have a tolerable meaſure of health and ſtrength.—But, ſuppoſing the worſt; let me aſk, What have we our time and ſtrength for but to lay them out for God? What is a candle made for but to be burnt? Burnt and waſted we muſt be;

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be; and is it not more reaſonable that it ſhould be in lighting men to heaven, and in working for God, than in living to the fleſh? How little difference is there between the pleaſure of a long life and a ſhort one, when both are at an end! What comfort will it be to you at death, that you lengthened your life by ſhortening your work? Our life is to be eſtimated according to the end and buſineſs of it; not according to the mere duration. He that works much, lives much. What Seneca ſaid of a drone, may be applied to an indolent miniſter, *Ibi jacet, non ibi vivit; et diu fuit, non diu vixit.* Will it not comfort us more at death to review a ſhort time faithfully ſpent, than a long life unfaithfully?

As for viſits and civilities, if they can anſwer greater ends than our miniſterial employments, you may break the ſabbath, or forbear preaching for them. But if not, how dare you make them a pretence for neglecting any other duty? Muſt God wait on your friends? What though they are Gentlemen or Lords, muſt they be ſerved before Him? Or is their diſpleaſure or cenſure more to be feared than HIS? It will be but a poor excuſe at the laſt day for neglecting men's ſalvation, "that ſuch a gentleman, or ſuch a friend would have taken it ill had you not waited on them." 'If you yet 'ſeek to pleaſe men, you are no longer the ſer-'vants of Chriſt.' He that dares to waſte his time

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in compliments, little conſiders what he has to do with it. Oh that I could but improve my time according to my conviction of its importance! He that hath looked death in the face as often as I have done, will know how to value it. I profeſs I am aſtoniſhed at thoſe miniſters that can find time to hunt, or ſhoot, or bowl, or uſe other recreations two or three hours, yea days together!—that can ſit an hour at once in vain diſcourſe, and ſpend whole days in complimental viſits, or journeys to the ſame purpoſe! Good Lord! what do ſuch men think on, when ſo many ſouls about them cry for their help, and when the ſmalleſt pariſh has work enough to employ all their diligence, night and day! If you have no ſenſe of the worth of ſouls; of the value of that blood which was ſhed for them, of the glory ſet before them, and of the miſery to which they are expoſed, then you are no Chriſtians; and therefore very unfit to be Miniſters. If you *have*, how dare you, like idle goſſips, chat and trifle away your time, when ſo many and ſuch great works call for it?

O precious time! how ſwiftly does it paſs away! how ſoon will it be gone! What are the forty years of my life that are paſt? Were every day as long as a month, methinks it were too ſhort for the work of a day. Have we not loſt time enough in the days of our vanity that we have any now to loſe? Never do I come to a dying man, who is not utterly

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terly ſtupid, but he better ſees the worth of time than others generally do. O then, if they could call time back again, how loud would they call! What would they give for it! Can WE then afford to trifle it away? Is it poſſible that a man of any true compaſſion and honeſty, or any concern about his miniſterial duty, or any ſenſe of the ſtrictneſs of his account, ſhould have time to ſpare for idleneſs and vanity? May a phyſician in the time of the plague take any more relaxation than is neceſſary for his life and health, when ſo many are expecting his help in a caſe of life or death? If his pleaſure be not worth men's lives, certainly yours is not worth men's ſouls.

Do not reply, "This is a hard ſaying, who can bear it? God does not require miniſters to make drudges of themſelves." Surely thoſe men are not likely to honour God, and promote his ſervice, who have ſuch baſe thoughts of it; nor can they delight in holineſs who account it a ſlaviſh work. Our Lord ſays, 'He that denieth not himſelf, and taketh not up his croſs to follow him, cannot be his diſciple.' But theſe men count it a ſlavery to labour hard in his vineyard, at a time when they have all accommodations and encouragements. If they had ſeen the diligence of Chriſt in doing good, when he neglected his meat to talk with one woman, and when he was ſo zealous in preaching as to 'have no time to eat bread,' they

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would have been of the same mind with his carnal friends who went to lay hold of him, and said 'he 'is besides himself.' If they had seen him all day in preaching and healing, and 'all night in prayer 'to God,' they would have told him that he made a slave of himself, and that God did not require so much ado. I cannot but advise such men to search their own hearts, and inquire whether they unfeignedly believe that word they preach. If you do Sirs, how can you think any labour too much for such weighty ends? If you do not, say so, and get you out of the vineyard: go with the prodigal to keep swine, and do not undertake the feeding of Christ's flock.

Do you not know that it is your own benefit you grudge at? The more you do, the more you receive: the more you lay out, the more you have coming in. The exercise of grace increases it. And is it a slavery to be more with God, and to receive more from him, than other men? It is the chief solace of a gracious soul to be doing good, and receiving good by doing it. Hereby also we are preparing for fuller receivings hereafter. We put out our talents to usury, and by improving them, shall make five become ten. They who esteem the service of God as slavery, justify the profane who look upon all diligent godliness in that light, and hereby aggravate their sin: and while they thus debase the work of the Lord, they do but debase themselves,

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themſelves, and prepare for a greater abaſement at laſt.

IV. Perhaps ſome may ſuggeſt "that if we make ſuch ſevere laws for miniſters, the church will ſoon be left without them, as few parents will chooſe ſuch a burden for their children, and many will be diſcouraged from undertaking it."

I anſwer; the carnal and ſelf ſeeking may be diſcouraged, but not thoſe that thirſt after the winning of ſouls, who are devoted to the ſervice of God and have 'taken up the croſs to follow the 'Lamb.' Chriſt would not forbear telling the world of the abſolute neceſſity of ſelf-denial for fear of diſcouraging men from his ſervice, but on the contrary declares that he will have none but ſuch as will ſubmit to it, and that thoſe who will not come on theſe terms may go their way, and ſee whether he wants their ſervice more than they want his protection and favour.—Theſe laws which you call ſevere, are not ours, but what Chriſt has made and impoſed. If I ſhould conceal or miſ-interpret them, that would not relax them, nor excuſe you. He who made them knew why he did it, and will expect the performance of them. And he will take care for a ſupply of paſtors. He has the fulneſs of the ſpirit, and therefore can give men hearts to do the duty he has impoſed. He that has under-

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taken the work of our redemption, will not loſe all his labour for want of inſtruments to carry on his work. He will provide his people with 'paſtors 'after his own heart, who ſhall feed them with 'knowledge;' who will 'ſeek not theirs, but 'them; and willingly ſpend and be ſpent for their 'ſake.' What do you think that Chriſt can have no ſervants, if ſuch as you with *Demas* 'for-'ſake him and turn to the preſent world?' If you diſlike his ſervice you may ſeek a better where you can find it, and boaſt of your gain in the concluſion; but do not threaten him with the loſs. Look to yourſelves as well as you can, and tell me at the hour of Death, or at the Judgment-day, who had the better bargain; whether Chriſt had more need of you, or you of him. It will not ſerve your turn to run out of the vineyard, on pretence that you cannot do the work; he can follow you and overtake you, as he did JONAH, with ſuch a ſtorm as ſhall lay you 'in the belly of hell.' Totally to caſt off duty becauſe you cannot endure to be faithful in the performance of it, will prove but a poor excuſe at laſt.

V. But the ſtrongeſt objection of all ſeems to be "that few people will ſubmit to be ſo freely dealt with by their miniſters, but will make a ſcorn at our motion."

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It cannot be denied, that too many people are obſtinate in their wickedneſs; that 'ſimple ones 'love ſimplicity, that ſcorners delight in ſcorning, 'and that fools hate knowledge.' But I wiſh it were not too much owing to miniſters, that a great part of our people are ſo obſtinate and contemptuous. If we did but ſhine and burn before them as we ought; were our ſermons and our lives more convincing; did we ſet ourſelves to do all the good we could do; were we more humble and meek, more loving and charitable; and did we let them ſee that we do but little eſteem any worldly things in compariſon with their ſalvation, much more might be done than is done; the mouths of many would be ſtopped, and the wicked would be more tractable and calm. — However, the worſe they are, the more are they to be pitied, and the more diligent ſhould we be for their recovery. Their wilfulneſs will not excuſe us from our duty. If we do not offer them our help, how do we know who will refuſe it? Offering it is our part; accepting is theirs. If we offer it not, we leave them excuſable, becauſe then they do not refuſe it; but we leave ourſelves without excuſe. If they refuſe our help when it is offered, we have done our part and delivered our own ſouls. But if ſome refuſe it, others will accept it; and the ſucceſs, with regard to them, may be ſuch as to reward all our labour, though it were much more. All are not

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wrought upon by public preaching; but we muſt not therefore give it over as unprofitable. In a word, there is nothing from God or from right reaſon to make us backward to any part of our work; though from the world, the fleſh, and the devil, we ſhall have much, and perhaps more than we yet expect. But if, againſt all temptations and difficulties, we have recourſe to God, and look on his great obligations on one ſide, and the hopeful effects and rewards on the other, we ſhall find but little cauſe to draw back or faint *.

* The author, in his preface to the 2d Edition, has a remarkable paſſage concerning his own experience on this head. "I find (ſays he) that we never took the righteſt courſe to demoliſh the kingdom of darkneſs till now. I wonder at myſelf that I was kept from ſo clear and excellent a duty ſo long. But the caſe was with me, as I ſuppoſe it is with others: I was convinced of my duty, but my apprehenſions of it were too ſmall, and the difficulties of it too great. Thus was I detained in delays, which I beſeech the Lord of mercy to forgive. Whereas upon trial, I find the difficulties to be nothing to what I imagined; and I experience the benefits and comforts of the work to be ſuch, that I would not wiſh to have neglected it, for all the riches in the world. We ſpend Monday and Tueſday (from the morning almoſt to night) in the work; taking about fifteen or ſixteen families in a week, that we may go through the pariſh (in which there are above eight hundred) in a year. And I cannot ſay that one family hath yet refuſed to come to me; or that many perſons have ſhifted it off. And with regard to moſt of them that come, I find more outward ſigns of ſucceſs than from all my preaching to them."

VI. But

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VI. But to all that I have ſaid, many will anſwer, "You build too much on *Paul*'s teaching from houſe to houſe, and other paſſages of the ſame kind. Thoſe times, when the churches were firſt planting, required more diligence than ours: ſhew us ſome paſſage of ſcripture which requires from us all that you have preſcribed; and eſpecially which obliges us to ſet apart two days in the week for it." I reply

1. I do not make it a miniſter's duty abſolutely to go up and down from houſe to houſe to each perſon in the pariſh, or of his charge; nay, I would not ſo much as adviſe you to this without neceſſity: but firſt call the people to come to you at your own houſe, or at the Veſtry, or wherever you pleaſe, ſo that you will but give them that perſonal inſtruction, on a proper inquiry into their ſtates, which their circumſtances require. And then go to thoſe that will not come to you, if they will conſent to it, and if you are able. For my own part, I cannot go from houſe to houſe without the apparent hazard of my life. And I think it more for the people's benefit to accuſtom them to attend their paſtor, (and it is much more for his) than for him to hunt up and down after them, ſcarcely knowing where or when. But men's obſtinacy may make that neceſſary which is inconvenient.

2. It is not on theſe texts in queſtion, or any

other, that I wholly ground this duty: though ſuppoſing there were no more than the general command of 'taking heed to ALL the flock,' ſurely this were ſufficient to convince you that you ſhould take as particular care of every individual as you can. Muſt I turn to my Bible to ſhew a Preacher where it is written that a man's ſoul is of more worth than a world? Or that both we and all we have are God's? Or that it is inhuman cruelty to let ſouls go to hell for fear we and our families ſhould live ſomewhat the harder? In a word, the queſtion is, Whether you are not bound to do the beſt you can to ſave the ſouls of all your people? Do this and I deſire no more. But do you think in your conſcience that you do the beſt you can, if you neglect to exhort, inſtruct, and catechiſe them?

3. To ſay the preſent times require leſs diligence than the days of the apoſtles, ſavours of a man lockt up in a ſtudy and unacquainted with the world. Good Lord! Are there ſuch multitudes round about us who are ignorant of the firſt principles of religion? Are there ſo many thouſands drowned in preſumption, ſecurity, and ſenſuality? So many drunkards, worldlings, haters and ſcoffers of a holy life? So many dull, ignorant, ſcandalous profeſſors? So many troublers, ſeducers, and dividers of the church? And yet is the happineſs of our times ſo great that we may excuſe ourſelves from perſonal

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perſonal inſtruction as unneceſſary? Look more without, and I warrant you that you will not ſee cauſe to ſpare your pains for want of work? What conſcientious miniſter finds not work enough to do from one end of the year to the other, though he has not an hundred ſouls to take care of? It is true there are more profeſſors of chriſtianity in our day than in the apoſtle's: but are the ungodly the leſs miſerable for that profeſſion, or the more ſo?

4. As to the objection that relates to the proportion of time to be allotted for this work, I anſwer, What if God only bids us to 'pray without ceaſing,' will you approve of thoſe who neglect prayer, becauſe they are not commanded to pray morning and night, or in the family? Set times are as needful for the conſtant performance of this duty, as for your private or family duties, your lectures or your ſtudies. When you have ſhewed me a written precept for theſe, or for preaching twice on the Lord's-day, then I will ſhew you more than one for the things in queſtion. However, I preſume not to impoſe an unneceſſary taſk on any, but leave it to your prudence to diſcern and determine the ſeaſons and other circumſtances of your duty.

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CHAP. IX.

Miſcellaneous Directions reſpecting the whole miniſterial Work *.

HAVING ſpoken of the MATTER of our work, we are next to ſpeak of the MANNER; not of each part diſtinctly, but of the whole in general. Here take the following directions.

I. Through the whole courſe of your miniſtry inſiſt moſt upon the greateſt, moſt certain, and moſt neceſſary things.

If we can but teach Chriſt to our people, we teach them all. Get them well to heaven, and they will have knowledge enough. The plaineſt, and moſt commonly acknowledged truths, are what men live moſt upon; theſe are the great inſtruments in deſtroying ſin, and in raiſing the heart to God. We ſhould always have our people's neceſſities in our eye. To remember that 'One thing is needful,' will take us off from needleſs ornaments, and unprofitable controverſies. Many other things are

* N. B. "The ſins of miniſters," which the author had pointed out in a diſtinct ſeries of particulars, are introduced in this; as many of the thoughts in both neceſſarily coincided.

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deſirable to be known, but theſe *muſt* be known, or elſe our people are undone for ever. Neceſſity ſhould be the great diſpoſer of a miniſter's ſtudies and labours. If we were ſufficient for every thing, we might undertake every thing, and take in order the whole Encyclopedia. But life is ſhort and we are dull. Eternal things are neceſſary, and the ſouls which depend on our teaching are precious.

I confeſs that neceſſity has been the conductor of my ſtudies, and my life. It chooſes what books I ſhall read, and when, and how long. It chooſes my text and makes my ſermon, both for matter and manner, as far as I can keep out my own corruptions. Though I know that the conſtant expectation of death has been a great cauſe of this with regard to myſelf, yet I ſee no reaſon why the moſt healthful man ſhould not make ſure of the neceſſaries firſt; conſidering the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of all men's lives. Who can, either in ſtudy, preaching, or life, be employed about foreign matters, when he knows that this or that muſt be done? As the ſoldier ſays, *Non diu diſputandum, ſed celeriter et fortiter dimicandum ubi urget neceſſitas*, ſo much more may we, as our buſineſs is more important. Doubtleſs this is the beſt way to redeem time, to ſpend it only on neceſſary things: and I think it is the way to be moſt profitable to others; though not always to be moſt pleaſing and applauded; becauſe through men's frailty, that is too true which

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which Seneca complains of, *Nova potius miramur quam magna.*

A preacher muſt be often upon the ſame things, becauſe the matters of neceſſity are few. This we ſhould not avoid, to ſatisfy ſuch as look for novelties, though we ſhould clothe the ſame neceſſaries with a grateful variety, in the manner of our delivering them. Neceſſaries are common and obvious; for ſuperfluities we may waſte our time and labour, and often to no purpoſe. The great volumes and tedious controverſies that ſo much trouble us and waſte our time, are uſually made up more of opinion than neceſſary truths*. — You would chooſe thoſe authors to read for yourſelves, which tell you what you know not, and treat of the moſt neceſſary things in the cleareſt manner, though it be in the moſt barbarous language, rather than thoſe which moſt learnedly, and in the moſt elegant language, tell you that which is falſe and vain, *et magno conatu nihil dicere*†? And ſurely you

* Neceſſitas brevibus clauditur terminis; Opinio nullis. MARSIL. FICINUS.

† Sunt qui ſcire volunt eo fine tantum ut ſciant, et turpis curioſitas eſt: et ſunt qui ſcire volunt ut ſcientiam ſuam vendant; et turpis quæſtus eſt: ſunt qui ſcire volunt ut ſciantur ipſi, et turpis vanitas eſt: ſed ſunt qui ſcire volunt ut ædificentur; et prudentia eſt: et ſunt quoque qui ſcire volunt ut ædificent; et CHARITAS eſt.

BERNARD, Serm. in Cant. 26.

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ſhould act on the ſame principle in teaching other men, as in ſtudying for yourſelf. They are commonly empty, ignorant men, deſtitute of the matter and ſubſtance of true learning, who are over curious about words and ornaments; who affect to be eſteemed what they are not, having no other way to procure that eſteem; whereas the oldeſt, moſt experienced, and moſt learned men, abound in ſubſtantial verities, uſually delivered in the plaineſt dreſs.

II. All our teaching ſhould be as PLAIN and intelligible as we can make it.

This beſt ſuits a teacher's ends. He that would be underſtood, muſt make it his *buſineſs* to be underſtood, by ſpeaking to the capacities of his hearers. Truth loves the light, and is moſt beautiful when moſt naked. He is an enemy that hides the truth; and he is a hypocrite who does this under a pretence of revealing it. Highly ornamented ſermons are like painted glaſs in windows, which keeps out the light, and are too often the marks of hypocriſy. If you would not teach men, what do you in the pulpit? If you would, why do you not ſpeak ſo as to be underſtood? For a man purpoſely to cloud his matter in ſtrange words, and hide his mind from the people whom he pretends to inſtruct, is the way to make fools admire his profound

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found learning, but wise men, his folly, pride, and hypocrisy.—Some persons purposely conceal their sentiments, through a pretence of necessity, because of men's prejudices, and the unpreparedness of common understandings to receive the truth. But truth overcomes prejudice by mere light of evidence. There is no better way to make a good cause prevail, than to make it as plain and as thoroughly understood as we can; this will properly dispose an unprepared mind. He that is not able to deliver his matter plainly to others (I mean as plainly as the nature of it will bear, and supposing them to have capacities for understanding it) shews that he has not well digested it himself.

III. We should always suit our instructions, and our behaviour, to the capacities and circumstances of those with whom we have to do.

Our work must be carried on prudently, orderly, and by degrees. Milk must go before strong meat. The foundation must be laid before we can build upon it. Children must not be dealt with as men at age. A person must be brought into a state of grace before we can expect from him the works of grace. The stewards of God's household must 'give to each their portion in due season.' We must not go beyond the capacities of our people, nor teach them the perfection, who have not learnt the

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the principles.—There muſt be a prudent mixture of ſeverity and mildneſs, both in our preaching and diſcipline: each muſt be predominant according to the quality of the perſon, or the matter we have in hand. If there be no ſeverity, our reproofs will be deſpiſed; if it be all ſeverity, we ſhall be eſteemed uſurpers of dominion.

IV. Every part of our work muſt be managed with great HUMILITY.

Pride is one of the moſt heinous, and yet one of our moſt palpable ſins. It diſcovers itſelf in many by their dreſs: it chooſes their cloth and their faſhion, and dreſſes their hair and their habit according to the taſte. And I wiſh this were all, or the worſt: but alas how frequently does it go with us to our ſtudies! How often does it chooſe our ſubject, and how much oftener our words and ornaments! Sometimes it puts in toys and trifles under a pretence of laudable embelliſhments, and often pollutes inſtead of poliſhing. It makes us ſpeak to our people what they do not underſtand, [merely to diſplay our learning.] It takes off the edge of a diſcourſe under a pretence of filing off the roughneſs and ſuperfluity. If we have a plain and cutting paſſage, it throws it away as too ruſtical or ungrateful. Now though our matter be of God, if our dreſſing and manner and end be from Satan (as is

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is the caſe when pride has the ordering of it) we have no great reaſon to expect ſucceſs. Yet thus does pride make many a man's ſermon. And when they have compoſed the diſcourſe, it goes with them into the pulpit; it forms their tone, it animates their delivery, it takes them off from what would be diſpleaſing, and directs them in the purſuit of vain applauſe. In ſhort, inſtead of ſeeking God's glory, and denying themſelves, it makes them, both in ſtudying and preaching, to ſeek themſelves and deny God. When they ſhould aſk, "What ſhall I ſay, and how ſhall I ſay it, to pleaſe God beſt, and do moſt good," pride makes them aſk, "What ſhall I ſay, and how ſhall I deliver it, to be thought a learned, able preacher, and to be applauded by all that hear me?" When the ſermon is done, pride goes home with them, and makes them more eager to know whether they were applauded, than whether they did any good to the ſouls of men. Were it not for ſhame, they could willingly aſk people how they liked them, to extort their commendations. If they perceive that they are highly thought of, they rejoice as having attained their end: if not, they are diſpleaſed, as having loſt the prize.

But this is not all: ſome miniſters are ſo ſet upon a popular air, and having the higheſt place in the eſteem of men, that they envy the abilities and names of their brethren who are preferred to them; as if all were taken from their praiſe, that is given to

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to another's, and as if God had bestowed his gifts upon them as the mere ornaments of their persons, that they might walk as men of reputation in the world; and as if all the gifts of other ministers were to be trodden down and vilified, if they should stand in the way of their honour. Strange! that one workman should malign another, because he helps him to do his master's work! Yet how common is this heinous crime among men of ability and eminence in the church! They will secretly blot the reputation of such as oppose their own, and will at least raise suspicions, where they cannot fasten accusations. Nay, some go so far as to be unwilling that any ministers abler than themselves should come into their pulpits, lest they should be applauded above themselves. It is a surprising thing that any man who has the least fear of God, should so envy his gifts in others, as that he had rather his carnal hearers should remain unconverted, than that they should be converted by another person who may be preferred to himself. Yet this sin does so prevail, that it is difficult to get two ministers to live together in love and quietness, unanimously to carry on the work of God: unless one of them be greatly inferior to the other, and content to be so esteemed, and to be governed by him, they are contending for precedency, envying each other's interest, and behaving with strangeness and jealousy towards one another, to the shame of their profession, and the injury of their congregations. Nay,

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so great is the pride of some ministers, that when they might have an equal assistant, to further the work of God, they had rather take all the burden upon themselves, though more than they can bear, than that any should share with them in their honour, or lest they should diminish their own interest in the people.

It is owing to pride that many ministers make so little proficiency: they are too proud to learn. It is through pride also that men so magnify their own opinions, and are as censorious of any that differ from them in lesser things, as if their sentiments were the rules of the churches faith. While we cry down papal infallibility, too many of us would be Popes ourselves, and would have every thing determined by our judgments, as if we were infallible. And so high are our spirits, that when any reprove or contradict us, (though not without sufficient reason) we are commonly impatient both of the matter and the manner. We love the man that will say as we say, and promote our reputation, though in other respects he be less worthy our esteem: but he is ungrateful to us, who differs from us, and contradicts us, and plainly tell us of our faults; especially in relation to our public performances. Many, through their pride, imagine that all those persons despise them who do not admire all they say, and submit to their judgments in the most palpable mistakes. Thus have they dishonoured themselves by idolizing their honour, and publicly

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publicly proclaimed their own ſhame. From pride proceed all the envy, contention, and unpeaceableneſs of miniſters, which are the hinderances to all reformation: all would lead, but few will follow or concur. Yea, hence proceed ſchiſms and apoſtacies, as did former perſecutions, arrogant uſurpations, and impoſitions. In ſhort, it is pride at the root that nouriſhes all our other ſins, and this virtually contains them all.

Give me leave, brethren, to expoſtulate with you and my own heart with regard to this ſin, that we may ſee the evil of it and be reformed. Pride is the ſin of devils; the firſt born of hell; it is that wherein the devil's image does principally conſiſt. It is an intolerable evil in a man that is ſo much engaged againſt him as we are. Pride ill becomes thoſe that are to lead men in ſuch an humble way to heaven. We had need to take care, leſt when we have brought others thither, the gate ſhould prove too ſtraight for ourſelves. God, who thruſt out a proud angel, will not there entertain a proud preacher as ſuch.——The very deſign of the goſpel tends to ſelf-abaſement. The work of grace is begun and carried on in humiliation. Humility is not the mere ornament of a chriſtian, but it is an eſſential part of the new creature. All that will be Chriſt's diſciples muſt come to him and learn of him: their leſſon is, to be 'meek and lowly in heart.' How many admirable precepts and examples has our

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our Lord and maſter given us to this end! Can we once conceive of him as waſhing and wiping his ſervants feet, and yet be haughty and domineering! Shall he converſe with the meaneſt, and ſhall we avoid them as contemptible, and think none but the rich and honourable fit for our ſociety! Many of us are oftener found in the houſes of gentlemen, than in the poor cottages of ſuch as moſt need our help; as if we had taken the charge only of the ſouls of the rich. Methinks we ſhould remember our title as MINISTERS, [which ſignifies *ſervants.*] We ſhould not ſpeak proudly or diſreſpectfully to any, but ſhould carry ourſelves meekly and courteouſly to all, remembering that we are obliged to be 'the ſervants of all.' We ſhould not be ſtrange to the pooreſt and meaneſt of the flock, but ſhould 'condeſcend to men of low eſtate,' as our equals in Chriſt. Familiarity improved to holy ends is neceſſary, and may do abundance of good; and ſurely a kind winning carriage is a very cheap way of doing it. We ſhould ſo teach others, as to be ready to learn of any; thus we may both teach and learn at once*: not proudly venting

* We may ſay of miniſters in general what *Auguſtine* ſaid of the aged of them; "Etſi magis decet docere quam diſcere, magis tamen decet diſcere quam ignotare."

"Ab omnibus libenter diſce quod tu neſcis: quia humilitas commune tibi facere poteſt, quod natura cuique proprium fecit, ſapienter omnibus eris, ſi ab omnibus diſcere volueris: qui ab omnibus accipiunt, omnibus ditiores ſunt." HUGO.

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our own conceits, and diſdaining all that any way contradict them, as if we, having attained the height of knowledge, were deſtined to the chair, and all other men were to ſit at our feet.

Alas, brethren! what is it that we have to be ſo proud of? Of our bodies? They are made of the ſame materials as the meaneſt of our fellow-creatures. Is it of our graces? The more we are proud of them, the leſs have we to be proud of, ſince much of the nature of grace is in humility. Is it of our learning and abilities? Surely, if we have any knowledge at all, we muſt know much reaſon to be humble. If we know more than others, we muſt know more reaſon to be humble than they do. But how little is it that the moſt learned know, in compariſon with what they are ignorant of! And to know how ignorant we are, and how far things are beyond our reach, one would imagine, could be no great cauſe of pride.

It is our very buſineſs to preach humility; it is therefore very unfit that we ſhould be proud. Muſt we ſtudy and preach humility, and muſt we not poſſeſs and practice it? A proud preacher of humility, is at leaſt a ſelf-condemning man. And I beſeech you to conſider, whether it will ſave us to ſpeak well of the grace we do not poſſeſs; whether ſincerity can conſiſt with allowed pride, and whether we can be ſaved without humility, any more than without temperance or chaſtity.

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Conſider further, brethren, I beſeech you, what baits there are in the miniſterial office, to entice to vanity, and what temptations to pride lie in our way, that you may be more upon your guard againſt it. What a ſnare may it prove, to have the fame of godly men, and of learned zealous preachers! How pleaſing is it to have the people crowd to hear us, and to be able to command their judgments and affections! Eſpecially to be renowned through the land for the higheſt ſpiritual excellencies! To have the people plead for us as their felicity, and call us the pillars of the church of God, and their fathers, 'the chariots and horſe-'men of Iſrael!' Alas! brethren, a little grace will ſerve to make you join with the forwardeſt of thoſe men that have theſe inducements; nay pride may do it without any ſpecial grace *. O therefore be jealous of yourſelves, and in all your ſtudies be ſure to ſtudy humility. 'He that ex-'alteth himſelf ſhall be brought low: whereas

* A Jeſuit, who had been employed twenty years in the miſſions of Canada, owned privately to his friend, that, while he did not believe in the being of a God, he had faced death twenty times for the ſake of the religion which he preached to the ſavages with great ſucceſs. His friend, hereupon, repreſented to him the inconſiſtency of hiz zeal: "Ah!" replied the miſſionary, "you have no idea of the pleaſure which is felt "in commanding the attention of twenty thouſand people, "and in perſuading them to what we believe not ourſelves." D'ALEMBET's Account of the Jeſuits. Ed.

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'he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.' I commonly obſerve, that almoſt all men, both good and bad, loathe the proud, and love the humble; ſo far does pride defeat its own ends. We have cauſe to be the more jealous of ourſelves, becauſe pride is a vice which is moſt deeply rooted in us, and with as much difficulty as any extirpated from the ſoul.

V. In every part of our work, we ſhould be ſerious, affectionate, zealous, and reverent.

The importance of our matter condemns coldneſs and ſleepy dulneſs. Our ſpirits ſhould be well awakened, that we may be fit to awaken others. If our words be not ſharp and piercing, they will hardly be felt by ſtony hearts. To ſpeak ſlightly and coldly about heavenly things, is as bad as to ſay nothing of them.

All our work muſt be managed REVERENTLY, as becomes them that believe the preſence of God; not treating holy things as if they were common. The more of God appears in our duties, the more authority will they have with men. Reverence is that affection of the ſoul which proceeds from deep apprehenſions of God, and denotes that the mind is much converſant with him. To manifeſt irreverence about the things of God, is ſo far to manifeſt hypocriſy, and that the heart

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agrees not with the tongue. I know not how it is with other perſons; but the moſt reverent preacher, who ſpeaks as if he ſaw the face of God, does more affect my heart, though with common words, than an irreverent man with the moſt accurate preparations, though he bawl it out with ever ſo much ſeeming earneſtneſs. If reverence be not equal to fervency, it has but little effect. Of all preaching in the world I hate that moſt which tends to make the hearers LAUGH, or to affect their minds with ſuch levity as STAGE-PLAYS do, inſtead of affecting them with an holy reverence of the name of God *. We ſhould ſuppoſe, when we draw near him in holy things, that we ſaw the throne of God, and the millions of glorious angels attending him, that we may be awed with his majeſty, leſt we profane his ſervice and take his name in vain.

VI. All our work ſhould be done SPIRITUALLY; as by men poſſeſſed of the Holy Ghoſt, and actuated by him.

* Docente in eccleſiâ te, non clamor populi, ſed gemitus ſuſcitetur: Lacrymæ auditorum laudes tuæ ſunt. JEROM.

" It will ſpoil all our admonitions to ſpeak of things immo-
" ral in a ludicrous jeſting way. They judge very ill that
" think the progreſs of ſin is to be ſtopped by a laugh or
" a jeſt. This is certainly a *jeſting which is not convenient.*"
Eph. v. 4. WRIGHT *on the Deceitfulneſs of Sin*, p. 203.

We

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We ſhould be men that 'ſavour the things of 'the ſpirit.' There is in ſome men's preaching a ſpiritual ſtrain which ſpiritual hearers can diſcern and reliſh; whereas in others, this ſacred tincture is ſo wanting, that even when they ſpeak of ſpiritual things, the manner is ſuch as if they were common matters. Our evidence and ornaments ought to be ſpiritual: rather borrowed from the ſcriptures (with a cautious ſubſervient uſe of human writings) than from the authority of *Ariſtotle*, or any other men. 'The wiſdom of the world' muſt not be magnified againſt 'the wiſdom of God.' Philoſophy muſt be taught to ſtoop and ſerve, while faith bears the principal ſway. The great ſcholars in *Ariſtotle*'s ſchool, muſt take heed of glorying too much in their maſter, and deſpiſing thoſe who are beneath them, leſt they themſelves prove lower in the ſchool of Chriſt, and 'leaſt in the 'kingdom of God,' while they would appear great in the eyes of men. As wiſe a man as any of them 'would glory in nothing but in the croſs of 'Chriſt, and determined to know nothing but him 'crucified*.' The moſt learned men ſhould think of this. Let all writers have their due eſteem, but compare none of them with the word of God. We

* Deus primo collegit indoctos: poſt modum philoſophos, et non per oratores docuit piſcatores, ſed per piſcatores, ſubegit oratores. GREG. M. Moral. L. 33.

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will not refuſe their ſervice, but we muſt abhor them as competitors. God is the beſt teacher of his own nature and will. It is the ſign of a diſtempered heart, when a perſon loſes the reliſh for ſcripture excellency. There is in a ſpiritual heart a connaturality to the word of God, becauſe this was the means of his regeneration. The word is that ſeal which made all the holy impreſſions that are in the hearts of true believers, and ſtampt the image of God upon them; they muſt therefore love that word as long as they live.

VII. The whole of our miniſtry muſt be carried on in a tender LOVE to our people.

We muſt let them ſee that nothing pleaſes us but what profits them; that what does them good, does US good, and that nothing troubles us more than their hurt. "Biſhops (as *Jerom* ſays) are "not lords, but fathers;" and therefore muſt be affected towards their people as their children: yea the tendereſt love of the mother ſhould not furpaſs theirs. We muſt even 'travail in birth for 'them till Chriſt be formed in them.' We ſhould convince them that we care for no outward thing, not money, nor liberty, nor credit, nor life itſelf, in compariſon with their ſalvation. When your people ſee that you unfeignedly love them, they will

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will hear any thing, and bear any thing*. We ourſelves ſhould put up with a blow given us in love, ſooner than with a hard word given us in anger and malice. Moſt men judge of advice, as they judge of the affection of him who gives it. O therefore ſee to it that you feel a tender love to your people in your breaſts, and let them feel it in your ſpeeches, and ſee it in your conduct: Let them ſee that you 'ſpend and are ſpent for their 'ſakes;' that all you do is not for any ends of your own, but for them. To this end, works of charity will be neceſſary, as far as your circumſtances allow. [Of which more hereafter.]

Be ſure that your love be not carnal, flowing from pride, and that you do not appear as one that is a ſuitor for himſelf, rather than for Chriſt; who loves becauſe he is beloved, or pretends it that he may be. Take heed that you do not connive at men's ſins under a pretence of love; for that were to contradict the very nature and ends of it †. Friendſhip muſt be cemented by piety. A wicked man can be no true friend. If you befriend the ſins of the wicked, you ſhew that you are ſuch yourſelves. By favouring their ſin you diſcover your enmity to God; and then how can you love your brother. If you be their beſt friends, help

* Dilige et dic quodcunque voles. AUG.

† Amici vitia ſi feras, facis tua. SENECA.

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them againſt their worſt enemies. Pretend not to love them if you favour their ſins, and do not ſeek their ſalvation. Do not think all ſharpneſs inconſiſtent with love. Parents will correct their children, and God himſelf, will 'chaſten every ſon 'that he loveth *.

VIII. Take care that your worldly and fleſhly intereſts, do not too much prevail againſt the intereſt of Chriſt and the good of ſouls.

Never be guilty of temporizing for the ſake of gain. It is one of the greateſt reproaches upon the miniſtry, that ſo many of us do ſo much ſuit themſelves to the party that is moſt likely to ſuit their ends, and promote their worldly advantage. This often occaſions our enemies to ſay, that reputation and preferment are our religion and our reward. Never let a regard to your worldly intereſt prevent your diſcharge of any part of your duty, even though the moſt diſagreeable to your people, and though it ſhould hinder them from paying their dues. I find, alas! that money is too ſtrong an argument for ſome miniſters to anſwer, who can proclaim 'the love of it to be the root of all evil,' and can make long orations on the danger of covet-

* Melius eſt cum ſeveritate diligere, quam cum lenitate decipere. AUG.

ouſneſs.

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ouſneſs. If it were ſo heinous a ſin in *Simon Magus* to offer to BUY the gifts of God with money, what muſt it be to SELL his gifts, his cauſe, and the ſouls of men for money! and what reaſon have ſuch to fear, leſt 'their money periſh with them!'

Be ſure that your concern about your temporal intereſt, does not prevent your Works of Charity. Bare Words will hardly convince men that you have any love to them. Works of charity do moſt powerfully remove men's prejudices, and open their ears to the words of piety. If they ſee that you are addicted to *do good*, they will more eaſily believe that you *are* good, and that it is good to which you would perſuade them. Go to the poor to ſee what they want, and at once ſhew your compaſſion to ſoul and body. Buy them catechiſms and other ſmall books that are likely to do them good. Stretch your purſe to the utmoſt of your power, and do all the good you can. I would put no one upon extremes: it is doubtleſs every man's duty to 'provide for thoſe of his own houſe.' But miniſters ſhould educate their children as other perſons in low circumſtances do, that they may be able to get their own livings in ſome honeſt trade or employment, without other great proviſion. You are bound to educate them ſo as they may be capable of doing the moſt ſervice for God; but not to leave them rich. You ſhould not forbear neceſſary works of charity, merely to make a larger

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proviſion for them. A truly charitable ſelf-denying heart, that hath devoted itſelf and all it hath to God, would be the beſt judge of due proportions; would ſee which way of expence is likely to do God the greateſt ſervice, and would cheerfully take that.

I would not have men lie under temptations to incontinency *;—but if miniſters muſt marry, they ſhould marry ſuch as can maintain themſelves and their children, and ſo devote as much as they can of the churches means, to the churches ſervice. But in this caſe, fleſh and blood make even good men ſo partial, that they ſometimes look upon duties, and duties of great importance, to be extremes. The fleſh will tell us that we muſt have a competency: and many pious men's competency is but little below the rich man's rates. If they be not clothed with the beſt, and fare not 'ſumptuouſly 'every day,' they have not a competency. Brethren, think not of being rich. 'Seek not great 'things for yourſelves,' or your poſterity. A man that preaches an immortal crown of glory, muſt not ſeek much after tranſitory vanity. He that teaches others the contempt of riches, muſt himſelf contemn them, and ſhew it by his life. He that

* The author here has a paſſage in favour of celibacy, which was thought indefenſible, and therefore is in this edition omitted.

recommends

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recommends self-denial and mortification, must practise these himself in the eyes of the world, if he would have his doctrine prosper. All christians, with all they have, are consecrated to their 'master's use:' but Ministers, as they are doubly devoted to God, are doubly obliged to 'honour 'him with their substance.' That man who has any thing in the world so dear to him that he cannot spare it for Christ, if he calls for it, is no true christian. What if you impoverish yourselves to do others good, will it be loss or gain? If you believe that God is your safest purse-bearer, and that to expend in his service is the greatest usury, shew your people that you do believe it. Do not take it as an undoing to 'make to you friends of the 'Mammon of unrighteousness, and to lay up for 'yourselves treasures in heaven,' though you leave yourselves but little on earth.

O what abundance of good might ministers do, if they would but live in a contempt of the world; the riches, and glories of it, and expend all they have for their master's use! This would unlock more hearts for the reception of their doctrine than all their oratory will do. Without this, singularity in religion will seem but hypocrisy, and perhaps is nothing more. Though we need not do as the Papists, who betake themselves to monasteries, and cast away all their property, yet we must have nothing but what we have for GOD. The world

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perhaps will expect more from us than we have; but if we cannot anſwer the expectations of the unreaſonable, let us do what we can to anſwer the expectations of God, and to ſatisfy conſcience and good men. Thoſe that have a large income muſt increaſe their charity in proportion. If you are not able to do many acts of charity, ſhew that you are willing, if you had ability, by doing that ſort of good you can.

IX. Let me recommend to you the cultivation and exerciſe of PATIENCE as a neceſſary concomitant of your work.

We muſt bear with many abuſes and injuries from thoſe for whom we are doing good. When we have ſtudied for them and prayed for them; when we have exhorted and beſought them with all condeſcenſion; when we have given them all we are able; have ſpent ourſelves for them, and tendered them as if they had been our children, we muſt expect that many will requite us with ſcorn, hatred, and contempt; that they will caſt our kindneſs in our faces with diſdain, and take us for their 'enemies becauſe we tell them the truth;' and that 'the more we love them, the leſs ſhall we be be-'loved.' All this muſt be patiently endured, and ſtill we muſt unweariedly hold out in doing them good; 'in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe 'themſelves,

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'themſelves, if peradventure God will give them 'repentance.' Though they ſcornfully reject our teaching, and bid us look to ourſelves, ſtill we muſt perſevere. We have to deal with diſtracted men, who will fly in the face of their phyſician; but we muſt not therefore neglect the cure. He is very unfit to be a phyſician who will be driven away from a frantic patient by foul words. It is not to be expected that fools ſhould make us as grateful returns for our care over them as wiſe men. But, alas! how ſadly do moſt miniſters come off in this part of their trial! When ſinners reproach and ſlander them for their love, what heart-riſings will there be! How will the remnants of the old Adam (pride and paſſion) ſtruggle againſt the meekneſs and patience of the new man!

X. In all our work we ſhould be as PEACEABLE as we can: we ſhould ſtudiouſly promote union and communion among ourſelves, and the unity and peace of the churches committed to our care.

We muſt be ſenſible how neceſſary this is to the proſperity of the whole church; the ſtrengthening of the common cauſe; the good of the particular members of our flock, and the further enlargement of the kingdom of Chriſt. Miniſters therefore ſhould feel very ſenſibly when the church is wounded, and

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ſhould be ſo far from being leaders in diviſions, that they ſhould conſider it as an important part of their work to prevent and heal them. They ſhould not only hearken to motions for unity, but ſhould ſtudy day and night to find out means to cloſe breaches; and ſhould alſo propoſe and proſecute them. Inſtead of quarrelling with our brethren, we ſhould combine againſt the common enemy.

Moſt miniſters will ſpeak for unity and peace; but how ſeldom do we ſee them addicted to promote it! Too commonly they are jealous of it, and are even the inſtruments of diviſion. The Papiſts have ſo long abuſed the name of *Catholic Church*, that in oppoſition to them, many either put it out of their creed, or only retain the name, while they underſtand not, or conſider not the nature of the thing, and behave not as members of that body. Of the multitude that ſay they are of the catholic church, it is rare to meet with men of a catholic ſpirit. They do not duly regard the *whole* church, but look upon their own party as if that were the whole. Moſt of them will pray hard for the proſperity of their ſect, and rejoice and give thanks when it goes well with them, thinking that the happineſs of the reſt conſiſts only in turning to them: but if any other party ſuffer, they little regard it; as if it were no loſs to the church at all. Nay, becauſe they are not of their mind, they wiſh for, and are glad to hear of their fall, imagining that is the

the way to the churches riſing. If they differ not among themſelves, they are but little troubled at differing from others, though it be from almoſt all the chriſtian world. The peace of their party they take for the peace of the church; no wonder therefore if they are concerned to carry it no further.

Few grow zealous of peace, till they grow old, or have much experience of men's ſpirits and principles, when they ſee better the true ſtate of the church and the ſeveral differences in it; and then they begin to write their *Irenicums*, to leave behind them when they are dead, as witneſſes againſt a wilful, ſelf-conceited, unpeaceable world. Many of theſe are extant at this day *. It often brings a man under a ſuſpicion either of favouring ſome hereſy, and of needing an indulgence to his own errors; or of having abated his zeal for the truth, if he does but attempt a pacificatory work: as if there were no zeal neceſſary for the great fundamental truths, and for the unity and peace of the church, but only for parties, and for ſome particular doctrines.

We have as ſad diviſions among us in England, as moſt nations have known: but is the

* See eſpecially HALL's excellent treatiſe called "The Peace-maker," and his "Pax Terris," which deſerve to be tranſcribed upon all our hearts.—To theſe the Editor begs leave to add, *Bennet*'s Irenicum; written by the author of *The Chriſtian Oratory*.

difference

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difference between the ſeveral denominations of Proteſtants ſo great that we might not come to an agreement? Were we but heartily willing, I know we might. I have converſed with ſome moderate men of all parties, and I perceive by their conceſſions, that a union were an eaſy work. If we could not in every point agree, we might eaſily leſſen our differences, and hold communion upon our agreement in the main; determining on the ſafeſt way for managing our few and ſmall differences, without the danger or trouble of the church. To the ſhame of all our faces be it ſpoken that this is not done. Let each party flatter themſelves as they pleaſe, this will be recorded to the ſhame of the miniſters of England as long as the goſpel abides in the world.

We confeſs the worth of peace; we read and preach on thoſe texts, that command us to 'follow peace with all men,' &c. and yet we ſit ſtill and neglect it as if it was not worth looking after; and too many will cenſure and reproach any that endeavour it, as if holineſs and peace were ſo fallen out that there were no reconciling them; when yet we have found by long experience that concord is a ſure friend to piety, and that piety always tends to concord. We have ſeen to our ſorrow, that where the ſervants of God ſhould have lived together as of one heart and voice, promoting each other's faith and holineſs; and rejoicing together in the

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the hope of future glory, they have, on the contrary, lived in mutual jealouſies, drowned holy love, in bitter contentions, and ſtudied to diſgrace and undermine one another, and to increaſe their own parties, by right or by wrong.

This ſin of diſcord among miniſters is accompanied with many heinous aggravations. We have ſeen how errors and hereſies breed by it, as diſcord is bred and fed by them. Nor have we ourſelves only ſcorched in this flame, but we have alſo drawn our people into it, ſo that they are fallen into ſeveral parties, and have turned much of their ancient piety into vain opinions, diſputes, and animoſities. And (which is worſt of all) the common ignorant people take notice of it, and not only deride us, but become hardened againſt religion. If we go about to perſuade them to be religious, they ſee ſo many parties, that they know not which to join with, and think that it is as well to belong to none at all as to join any, ſince they know not which is the right. Many poor carnal wretches think themſelves in the better caſe, while they hold to their old formalities, and we hold to nothing. Did we but agree among ourſelves in the main, and do as much of God's work as we could in concurrent unanimity, our words would have ſome authority with them, and we ſhould be in a greater capacity to do them good. But if our tongues and hearts be divided, no wonder if our work prove more

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more like a *Babel* than the Temple of God. It is not ſtrange that the people ſhould deſpiſe us, if we deſpiſe one another. Some miniſters, by their bitter opprobrious ſpeeches of others, have more effectually done the devil's ſervice, under the name of ORTHODOXY and ZEAL FOR THE TRUTH, than the malignant ſcorners of godlineſs could poſſibly have done. The matter is come to this paſs, that there are few men of note, of any party, but who are ſo publicly reproached by the other parties, that the ignorant and wicked rabble, who ſhould be converted by them, have learnt to be orthodox, and to vilify and ſcorn them.

Miſtake me not: I do not ſlight ORTHODOXY, or jeer at the name, but only expoſe the pretences of deviliſh zeal in pious, or ſeemingly pious men. I know that many of theſe reverend calumniators think that they laudably diſcover that ſoundneſs in the faith, and that zeal for the truth, which others want; but I will reſolve the caſe in the words of the Holy Ghoſt: 'Who is a wiſe man, and endowed wiſh knowledge among you? Let him 'ſhew out of a good converſation his works with 'meekneſs and wiſdom. But if you have bitter 'envying or ſtrife in your hearts, glory not, and 'lie not againſt the truth; this wiſdom deſcendeth 'not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, and de'viliſh; for where envying and ſtrife is, there is 'confuſion and every evil work. The wiſdom 'that

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'that is from above is firſt pure, and then peace-
'able, gentle, and eaſy to be entreated, full of
'mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and
'without hyprocriſy; and the fruit of righteouſ-
'neſs is ſown in peace for them that make peace.'
James iii. 13—18. I beſeech you read theſe words again and again, and ſtudy them well.

The moſt common cauſe of our diviſions and unpeaceableneſs is, men's high eſteem of their own opinions. This works various ways: *e. g.* by ſetting them upon ſeeking after novelties. Some are as buſy in their inquiries after new doctrines as if the ſcriptures were not perfect, and are for making new articles of faith, and finding out new ways to heaven. The body of Popery came in at this door.—Pride occaſions diviſions likewiſe, by putting a higher rate upon ſome truths than the church of Chriſt had ever done; by making that to be of abſolute certainty, and of neceſſity to ſalvation, which had not before been received, or but as a doubtful point, and of a lower nature, which ſome were for, and ſome were againſt, without any great mutual cenſure. But diviſions are more eſpecially occaſioned, when the pride of men's hearts makes them ſo over-value their own conceptions, and to be ſo confident that they and their own ſect are in the right, as to expect all others to be of their mind, and ſo cenſorious as to condemn all that differ from their party. Hereupon

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ariſe ſuch breaches in affection and communion as there are. And it uſually happens that this confidence does but betray men's ignorance, and ſhew that many make up in paſſion what they want in reaſon; zealouſly condemning what they little underſtand. It is far eaſier to ſay that another man is erroneous and rail at him as a deceiver, than to give a juſt account of our own belief. And I have obſerved it is the trick of ſome that can ſcarcely give a reaſon for any controverted part of their creed (nor it may be of the fundamentals) to reproach thoſe that differ from them as *unſound*, in order to get the name of *orthodox* divines.

Many take up their opinions only in compliance with their ſeveral parties; looking more *who* believes them, than *what* they believe, or on what grounds; and too many take up even the truth itſelf in a faction; and therefore they muſt ſpeak againſt thoſe that they hear ſpeak againſt their party. How many hot diſputes have I heard, which the diſputants have been forced to manifeſt they underſtood nothing about! Nay, they will often drive all to damnatory concluſions, when they do not underſtand one another's meaning, and are unable, if you call upon them for it, to give a definition of [the terms they themſelves uſe.] Thus do we proceed, in a contentious zeal, to cenſure our brethren, and divide the church.

I entreat of you brethren, be very tender of the unity

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unity and peace, not only of your own parties, but of the whole church. To this end, keep close to the ancient simplicity of the christian faith, the foundation and centre of catholic unity. Do not easily introduce any novelties in the church either in faith or practice. Some have already introduced such phrases, at least, even about the great points of faith, that there may be reason to reduce them to the primitive patterns.

A great stir is made in the world about the Test of a true christian church, with which we may hold communion. And indeed the true cause of our continued unhappy divisions, is the want of discerning the centre of our unity, and the terms on which we may unite; which is a great pity, since this was once so easy a matter, till the ancient Test was thought insufficient. The faith of the Papists is too large for all men to agree upon, or indeed for themselves, if it were not enforced with arguments drawn from the fire and the halter. And many Protestants do too much imitate them in the tedious length of their subscribed Confessions, and new impositions. We may talk of peace as long as we live, but we shall never obtain it till we return to the apostolical simplicity. We must abhor the arrogance of them that frame new engines to wrack and tear the church of God, under pretence of obviating errors and maintaining the truth. We must let no man's writings, or the judgment of

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of any party, be made the Teſt of truth. If we thruſt into it all the canons of former councils about matters of order, diſcipline, and ceremonies, or gather up all the opinions of the Fathers for the three or four firſt ages, none of theſe will ever ſerve to found a catholic union upon. The Scripture-ſufficiency muſt be maintained, and nothing beyond it impoſed on any. If Papiſts, or others, call upon us for the ſtandard of our religion, we muſt ſhew them the BIBLE rather than any Confeſſions of churches, or writings of men. More lines would meet in this centre than are likely to meet in any other.

I know it is ſaid "That a man may ſubſcribe the Scripture and the ancient creeds, and yet maintain Hereſies:" To which I anſwer, ſo he may any other teſt which you yourſelves ſhall contrive; and while you make a ſnare to catch Heretics, inſtead of a teſt for the churches communion, you will miſs your end: the Heretic, by the ſlipperineſs of his conſcience, will get through, and the tender chriſtian may poſſibly be enſnared. Two things are neceſſary to obviate Hereſies, viz. the Law, and the good execution of it. God hath made the former, which, both for ſenſe and phraſe, is ſufficient: let us but do our part in the due execution of it, and we ſhall do all that belongs to us.

This I would recommend to all my brethren, as neceſſary

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neceſſary to the churches peace; that you learn to diſtinguiſh between certainties and uncertainties; between neceſſaries and unneceſſaries; between catholic truths and private opinions; and lay the ſtreſs upon the former inſtead of the latter. Unite in neceſſary truths, and tolerate tolerable failings. Bear with one another in things that may be borne with, and do not make larger Creeds or more neceſſaries than God has done. In order to this, learn to ſee the true ſtate of controverſies, and reduce them to the point where the difference lies, inſtead of making them greater than they are.

Lay not too great ſtreſs upon thoſe controverted opinions, which have good men, and eſpecially which have whole churches, on both ſides; much leſs on ſuch controverſies as are ultimately reſolved into philoſophical uncertainties; as ſome unprofitable diſputes about Free-will; the manner of the Spirit's operation on the mind; the divine decrees, &c. &c. But eſpecially lay not any ſtreſs upon controverſies which are of no importance; which, if they were anatomized, would appear to be merely verbal: of which ſort (I ſpeak confidently upon certain knowledge) are many that now make a great noiſe in the world, and rend the church; though the eager contenders do not diſcern, and will not believe it.

He that ſhall live in that happy day when God will heal his broken churches, will ſee all that I am

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am pleading for reduced to practice. Moderation will take place of dividing zeal; the Scripture-ſufficiency will be maintained; and all human Confeſſions and comments will be valued only as ſubſervient helps. Till that time comes, we cannot expect healing truth will be entertained, ſince there are not healing ſpirits in the leaders of the church; but when the work is to be done, the work-men will be fitted for it; and bleſſed will be the agents in ſo glorious a cauſe!

But becauſe the love of unity and truth, of peace and purity, ſhould go together, we muſt avoid the two extremes, both in doctrine and diſcipline. One extreme in Doctrine is making new additions: [this we have already conſidered.] The other is, hindering the progreſs of knowledge: this we commonly run into by avoiding the former. It muſt be conſidered, therefore, how far we may improve, and not be culpable innovators. And (1.) our knowledge muſt increaſe *extenſively*. We muſt endeavour to know more truth, though we muſt not feign more. Much of ſcripture will remain unknown to us when we have done our beſt. Though we ſhall find out no more Articles of faith which muſt be explicitly believed by all that will be ſaved, yet we may find out the ſenſe of more texts, and ſome doctrinal truths not contrary to the former, but ſuch as befriend them and are connected with them. And we may find out more the

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the order of truths, and how they ſtand in reſpect to one another; and ſo we may ſee more of the true method of theology than we did, which will give us a great light into the thing itſelf. (2.) Our knowledge muſt alſo grow *ſubjectively* and *intenſively*. And this is the principal growth to be ſought after. We ſhould endeavour to know the ſame great and neceſſary truths with a ſounder and clearer underſtanding; by getting more and ſtronger evidences of them, and a clearer and deeper apprehenſion of the ſame evidence: for one that is ſtrong in knowledge ſees the ſame truth as in the daylight, which the weak ſee as in the twilight. To all this muſt be added, the fuller Improvement of the truth received, to its proper object.

With reſpect to Church-communion alſo, we ſhould carefully avoid extremes, and endeavour to preſerve purity as well as peace. As on the one hand we ſhould diſcourage the unneceſſary ſeparations of proud men, (either becauſe the churches do not fall in with their opinion, or becaute they are not ſo reformed in diſcipline as they would have them, or ſo ſtrict as they ſhould be) ſo on the other hand we ſhould guard againſt the neglect or relaxation of diſcipline, to the corrupting of the church, the encouragement of wickedneſs, and the confounding of the kingdom of Chriſt with that of Satan.

XI. In order to promote unity and concord in the

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the churches, and to further each other in the work of the Lord, let me beſeech you to maintain Meetings for *communion* among yourſelves.

Do not grow ſtrange to one another, but incorporate and hold all chriſtian correſpondence. Diſtance breeds ſtrangeneſs, and foments dividing flames and jealouſies, which communion will prevent or cure. It is the chief plot of our enemies to divide us in order to weaken us: let us not conſpire with them. Cheriſh not heart-burnings, nor continue uncharitable diſtances. If dividing has weakened you, uniting muſt recover your authority and ſtrength. Get together then and conſult for peace. If you have any diſlike to any of your brethren, or to their conduct, manifeſt it by a free debate with them. If you will but keep together, you may come to a better underſtanding of each other, or at leaſt correct yourſelves. The ſcripture commands all chriſtians to be 'of one mind, and to pre-'ſerve the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace,' and obliges miniſters to 'be one even as Chriſt and 'the Father are one.' You cannot be ignorant that the unity of miniſters is their honour, as well as their duty, and that much of their ſtrength with the people lies in it; nor, that conſtant communion and correſpondence is neceſſary in order to it. Miniſterial communion is as much a duty as chriſtian communion.

Indeed

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Indeed miniſters have need of one another, and muſt improve the gifts of God in one another. If you are humble men, you will think that you have need of the advice and aſſiſtance of your brethren. The ſelf-ſufficient are the moſt deficient: the proud are commonly empty men. There are many young, raw miniſters who eſpecially need the help that ſuch communion may afford them, and the advice of more grave experienced men, for carrying on the work of their miniſtry. And many others are ſo humble and ſenſible of their deficiencies, that they would be loth to be deprived of it. That may ſometimes be ſpoken by a man of inferior parts which came not into the minds of wiſer men. Few miniſters are ſo weak but they may ſometimes improve thoſe that are wiſer than themſelves. And thoſe that are endowed with greater parts, will have an opportunity to do greater good with them [in ſuch aſſociations] than they could otherwiſe do. If you are above advice or any help to yourſelves [that will not excuſe your abſence, for] your brethren have the more need of you by how much the leſs you have of them.

But remember theſe aſſemblies are not merely for your own benefit and mutual edification, but the church and the common good require them. You owe duty to your neighbour churches, as well as miniſters; and by carrying on lectures, or conferences, you will have an opportunity of conſult-

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ing for the common good, and of promoting your common work. Do not ſhew yourſelves contemners or neglecters of ſuch a neceſſary buſineſs.

Let none draw back that accord in the ſubſtantials of faith and godlineſs. Yea though ſome ſhould think themſelves neceſſitated to ſeparate in public worſhip from the reſt, methinks if they be chriſtians indeed, they ſhould be willing to hold as much communion with each other as they can, and to conſult how to manage their differences to the leaſt diſadvantage to the chriſtian cauſe, and the common truths which they all profeſs to own and prefer. Though they cannot change their minds about thoſe opinions which hinder their union, it might reaſonably be expected of every party among us which profeſs themſelves chriſtians, that they ſhould value the Whole before a Part, and therefore not ſo perverſely ſeek to promote their own parties as to hinder the common good of the church. And methinks a little humility ſhould make men aſhamed of that common conceit of unquiet ſpirits, That the welfare of the churches depends upon their opinions. If they are indeed a living part of the body, the hurt of the whole will be ſo much their own, that they cannot deſire it for the ſake of any party or opinion whatever. If that evil ſpirit 'whoſe name is Legion' has ſuch power over the hearts of any that they will quarrel at the pacificatory endeavours of others, who hunger after the

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the healing of the church, and rather hinder them than help them on, I muſt ſay, how diligently ſoever they may preach, and how pious ſoever they may ſeem to be, If this way tends to their everlaſting peace, and if they be not preparing ſorrow for themſelves, I am a ſtranger to the way of peace.

It is paſt doubt that differing brethren may well join in recommending to the ignorant people the truths that they are agreed in. Archbiſhop *Uſher* made a motion for this in *Ireland* even to the Papiſts themſelves. "But (ſays he) through the jealouſies which diſtractions in matters of religion "have bred amongſt us, the motion had ſmall "effect, and ſo between us both, the poor people "are ſtill kept in miſerable ignorance, knowing "the grounds neither of the one religion nor the "other*." This is very much the caſe among us in England. It is rare to find any, though differing only in the point of Infant-baptiſm, that will calmly, and without fraudulent deſigns of ſecretly promoting their own opinions by it, entertain and proſecute ſuch a motion for the common good; as if they had rather chriſtianity ſhould be thruſt out of the world, or kept under, [than that their own notions ſhould not be propagated.] Well, let any perſon or party pretend what they will of zeal and

* Sermon before King James at Wanſtead, on the unity of the church.

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holineſs, I will ever take the *Dividatur* for an ill ſign. The true mother abhors the diviſion of the child; and the true chriſtian prefers the common intereſt of chriſtianity to that of a faction or opinion, and would not have the whole building endangered rather than that one peg ſhould be driven in otherwiſe than as he would have it.—Do not then neglect theſe brotherly meetings for the ends that have been mentioned, nor yet attend them unprofitably, but improve them to your mutual edification, and for the effectual carrying on the good of the churches.

Do not aſk why you cannot do your duty to God and your people at home, without travelling many miles to a meeting of miniſters; nor plead that you have buſineſs of your own to do, when you ſhould be doing the work of God; nor under a pretence of loving to live privately, prefer your own eaſe to God's ſervice.—Some of thoſe indeed that excuſe themſelves are careleſs and ſcandalous men: we ſhould have no deſire of their company, nor admit it, but upon their repentance and reformation. —Some are empty men, and are afraid their weakneſs ſhould be known: but they cannot conceal it by their ſolitude, whereas they might do much to heal it by communion with their brethren. — As for thoſe that are averſe to aſſociating with us becauſe we are not of their party, let it be conſidered that by ſuch communication they might give or receive

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receive better information; or at leaſt carry on ſo much of God's work in unity as we are agreed in. Let us reſolve, by the grace of God, to adhere to more catholic principles and practices, and to have communion with all godly chriſtians that will have communion with us. But ſome object to attending theſe aſſociations,

1. Becauſe, they ſay, "A few men commonly do all, and the reſt do but follow them."—I anſwer; There is no one in our aſſociations that pretends to any authority over his brethren; either civil coercive power, or eccleſiaſtical directive power. If any have ſo much power as you ſpeak of, it ſeems to be but the power of Truth in them, and ſuch as light hath againſt darkneſs. And perhaps thoſe that you call the leaders of the reſt, find themſelves to need the help of thoſe whom you ſay they lead, more than you do theirs. But if you do indeed think that theſe leading miniſters miſlead the reſt, there is the more need of the preſence of ſuch as you who diſcern it, and who may do much to undeceive them.

2. I hear many ſay, "Under pretence of aſſociating, you will but fall into a multitude of fractions. Not two counties can agree upon the ſame terms; and why ſhould we join with any of them till there be a greater likelihood of union among themſelves?"—An unreaſonable and ſelf-condemning objection. Are they more divided who aſſoci-

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ate, than you who are ſingle and go every man his own way? But wherein does this diverſity conſiſt, which you complain of? I ſee none [that ſhould prevent communion.] The truth is, this objection is commonly made by men that place the unity of the church in what God never placed it in. We muſt not be united becauſe we ſubſcribe not the ſame form of words, and agree not in every circumſtance or expreſſion; nor ſhall we ever be united while unity is placed in ſuch indifferent things. There are no greater dividers of the church in the world than thoſe that over-do it in pretending to *unity*, and lay the unity of the church upon that which will not bear it. There is no poſſibility of bringing all to be of every formaliſt's opinion, and to uſe every geſture or form of words that he ſhall impoſe. Unneceſſary impoſitions will occaſion contention; whereas, where all are left to their liberty, I never hear of contention or offence. In the preſent caſe we do not intend, by our aſſociating, to tie one another to new forms and ceremonies, nor to make new terms of union for the churches: all parties may join with us without deſerting their principles*.

If any aſſociations ſubſcribe to ſuch things as

* What was added here relating to the agreement ſubſcribed by the miniſters in the Worceſterſhire Aſſociation, is now omitted, as being too local, and hardly conſiſtent with the author's plan of union.

you

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you cannot in conſcience agree to, propoſe the reaſons of your diſſent, and beg leave to except thoſe articles with which you are diſſatisfied, without unneceſſarily withdrawing from your brethren's communion; of which, if they be peaceable men, they will readily admit. But if they would force you to ſubſcribe againſt your judgment, or elſe hold no communion with you, then *they* exclude you, and you do not exclude yourſelves. But I hope no aſſociations among us will be guilty of ſuch a practice.

XII. [Let all endeavour to make theſe aſſociations as uſeful as poſſible to each other, and ſubſervient to the intereſt of religion in general.]

Quarrel not, my friends, upon points of precedency, or reputation, or any intereſt of your own. No man will have ſettled peace in his mind, or be peaceable in his place, that proudly envies the precedency of others, and ſecretly grudges at them that ſeem to cloud his parts and name. One or other will ever be an eye-ſore to ſuch men. There is too much of the Devil's image in this ſin, for a humble ſervant of Chriſt to entertain.—Be not too ſenſible of injuries, nor make too great a matter of every offenſive word or deed. At leaſt do not let it interrupt your concord in God's work: that were to wrong Chriſt and his church becauſe another has

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wronged you. If you be of this impatient humour you will never be quiet: for we are all faulty, and cannot live together without wronging one another. Proud, over tender men are often hurt by their own conceits; like a man that has a ſore, who thinks that it ſmarts the more when he imagines ſome body hits it. They will often think that a man jeers them or means them ill, when it never came into his thoughts.—Till this SELF be taken down, we ſhall every man have a private intereſt of his own, which will lead us all into ſeparate ways, and ſpoil the peace and welfare of the church. While every man is for himſelf and his own reputation, and 'all mind their own things,' no wonder if they 'mind not the things of Chriſt.' [Concur together as brethren to promote the common cauſe, and be ready to do good when ever you have an opportunity for it.] If we are heartily devoted to the work of the Lord, let us compaſſionate the congregations about us that are unprovided for, and endeavour to help them to able miniſters, [conſulting with each other for this purpoſe.] In the mean time, we ſhould ſtep out now and then to their aſſiſtance, when the buſineſs of our own particular charge will give us leave. A lecture in the more ignorant places, purpoſely for the work of converſion, carried on by the moſt lively, affectionate preachers, might be very uſeful where conſtant means are wanting. [In theſe aſſociations,

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associations, plans might be advantageously formed for such a purpose.]

XIII. In your whole ministerial work keep up constant desires and expectations of SUCCESS.

If your hearts be not set on the end of your labours, if you do not long to see the conversion and edification of your hearers, and study and preach in hope, you are not likely to see much success. It is a sign of a false self-seeking heart, when a person is contented to be still doing, without seeing any fruit of his labour. I have observed that God seldom blesses any man's work so much as his whose heart is set upon the success of it. Let it be the property of a *Judas* to have more regard to *the bag* than to the business. Leave it to such worldings as he to be satisfied, if they have their salary, and the applause of the people; but let all that preach for Christ and the salvation of men, be dissatisfied till they have the thing they preach for. He never had the right ends of a preacher in view, who is indifferent whether he obtain them or not; who is not grieved when he misses them, and rejoiced when he can see the desired issue. When a man only studies what to say, and how to spend the hour with commendation, without looking any more after it, but to know what the people think of his abilities, and holds on thus from

year to year, I muſt needs think that he preaches for himſelf; that he drives on a private trade of his own; and that when he preaches Chriſt, he preaches not *for* Chriſt, how excellently ſoever he may ſeem to do it.

I know that a faithful miniſter may have comfort when he wants ſucceſs. 'Though Iſrael be 'not gathered, our reward is with the Lord,' Our acceptance is not according to our fruit, but according to our labour. But then he who longs not for the ſucceſs of his labours, can have none of this comfort, becauſe he is not a faithful labourer. This is only for them whoſe hearts are ſet upon the end, and are grieved if they miſs it. This is not the full comfort that we muſt deſire, but only what may quiet us if, notwithſtanding our utmoſt care, we fail of the reſt. What if God will accept the phyſician though the patient die? He muſt ſtill work in compaſſion, and do his utmoſt to ſave his life. We labour not for our own reward, but for other men's ſalvation.—I confeſs, for my part, that I wonder at ſome ancient reverend men, who have lived thirty, or forty, or fifty years with an unprofitable people, where they have been ſcarcely able to diſcern any fruit of their labours, that they can with ſo much patience continue there. I ſhould not be eaſily ſatisfied to ſpend my days in ſuch a manner, but ſhould ſuſpect that it was the will of God I ſhould go ſome where elſe, that another

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ther perſon might come there, better ſuited to them, and more uſeful among them. Once more,

XIV. Our whole work muſt be carried on under a deep ſenſe of our own inſufficiency, and in a pious, believing dependance upon CHRIST.

We muſt go to Him for light, and life, and ſtrength, who ſends us on our work. When we feel our faith weak, and our hearts grown dull, and unſuitable to ſo great a work as that we have to do, we muſt have recourſe to the Lord, and pray that we may not go to perſuade others to believe, with an unbelieving heart of our own; or to plead with ſinners about everlaſting life and death, while we have but a faint belief and feeling of theſe things ourſelves; but that, as he has ſent us forth to his work, he would furniſh us with a ſpirit ſuitable to it. Prayer muſt carry on our work as well as preaching. He preaches not heartily to his people, who doth not often pray for them. If we prevail not with God to give them faith and repentance, we are unlikely to prevail with them to believe and repent. PAUL gives us his example in this reſpect, who tells us that he prayed for his hearers 'night and day exceedingly.' Since our own hearts and thoſe of our people are ſo far out of order as they be, if

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we prevail not with God to help and mend them, we are likely to make but unſucceſsful work.

CHAP. X.

The Concluſion of the Work; being a particular Application of the whole.

REVEREND and dear brethren; let us now humble our ſouls before the Lord for our paſt negligence, and implore his aſſiſtance for the time to come. Indeed we cannot expect the latter without the former. If God will help us in our future duty, he will certainly firſt humble us for our paſt ſin. He that has not ſo much ſenſe of his faults as unfeignedly to lament them, will hardly have ſufficient to make him reform them.—Shall *we* deny, or excuſe, or extenuate our ſins while we call our people to ſuch free confeſſions? It is too common with us to expect that from them which we do little or nothing of ourſelves. Too many labour for other men's ſouls while they ſeem to forget that they have any of their own to regard. They act as if their part lay only in calling for repentance, and the hearer's in repenting: theirs in crying down ſin, and the people's in forſaking it;

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it: theirs in preaching duty, and the hearer's in performing it. If we did but ſtudy half ſo much to affect and mend our own hearts, as we do to affect and mend thoſe of our people, it would not be with many of us as it is. It is much too little that we do for their humiliation, but I fear it is much leſs that we do for our own. It is a ſad thing that ſo many of us have preached our hearers aſleep; but it is worſe ſtill if we have ſtudied and preached ourſelves aſleep; and have talked ſo long againſt hardneſs of heart, till our hearts are grown hard under the noiſe of our own reproofs!—Is it not better to give God glory by a full and humble confeſſion, than in tenderneſs of our own glory to ſeek for fig-leaves to cover our nakedneſs? and to put God upon building that glory which we have denied him, on the ruins of our own which we have preferred to his?

It is certainly our duty to call to remembrance our manifold ſins, eſpecially thoſe that are moſt obvious, and ſet them in order before God and our own faces, that he may 'caſt them behind his 'back:' to deal plainly and faithfully with ourſelves, in a free confeſſion, that he who is 'faith-'ful and juſt may forgive us our ſins; and to judge 'ourſelves that we may not be judged of the Lord:' for they only, whether paſtors or people, who 'con-'feſs and forſake their ſins ſhall find mercy; he 'that hardeneth his neck ſhall fall into miſchief.'

Sins

Sins openly committed are more diſhonourable to us when we hide them than when we confeſs them. It is the Sin, and not the confeſſion of it that is our diſhonour. We have committed them before the ſun, ſo that they cannot be hid: attempts to cloak them increaſe the guilt and ſhame. Truly humble miniſters, will rather be diſpoſed to lament their guilt in the face of their congregations. It will not be amiſs to look back, and imitate the ſervants of God in ancient times, in their confeſſions. We find in ſcripture that the Guides of the church did confeſs their own ſins as well as thoſe of the people. See the example of *Ezra;* he confeſſed the ſins of the prieſts, 'caſting 'himſelf down before the houſe of God.' So did the Levites. So did *Daniel.* And God expreſsly required 'the Prieſts, the Miniſters of the Lord to 'weep' as well as others *.

I think if we conſider well the duties that have been explained and recommended, and at the ſame time, the manner in which we have performed them, we cannot doubt whether we have cauſe for humiliation. He that reads this one exhortation of Paul from whence the text is taken, and compares his life with it, is ſtupid and hardened indeed if he be not laid in the duſt before God,

* Ezra ix. 6, 7, 10. Neh. ix. 32—34. Dan. ix. 20. Joel ii. 15—17.

bewailing

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bewailing his great omiſſions; and forced to fly to the blood of Chriſt, and his pardoning grace. O! What cauſe have we all to bleed before the Lord, that we have been miniſters ſo many years, and yet have done ſo little, eſpecially by private conference, for the ſaving of men's ſouls! Had we done our duty, who knows how many ſouls might have been brought to Chriſt, and how much happier we might have been in our pariſhes? And why did we not do it? Many impediments were doubtleſs in our way; but if the greateſt had not been in ourſelves,—in our darkneſs and dulneſs, our indiſpoſition to duty, and our diviſions, much more might have been done for God than has yet been done. We have ſinned, and have no juſt excuſe for our ſin. The ſin is great becauſe our duties were great. We ſhould therefore be afraid of excuſing ourſelves too much. The Lord of mercy forgive us, and all his miniſters, and lay not any of our miniſterial negligence to our charge! Oh that he would cover all our unfaithfulneſs, and by 'the blood of the everlaſting covenant' waſh away our guilt of the blood of ſouls! that 'when 'the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear, we may ſtand 'before him in peace,' and may not be condemned for ſcattering of his flock.

And now, brethren, what have we to do for the time to come, but to deny our lazy contradicting fleſh, and rouſe up ourſelves to the great buſineſs in

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in which we are employed? 'The harveſt is great, 'the labourers are too few'—the loiterers and contentious hinderers are many—The ſouls of men are precious—The miſery of ſinners is great—The future torment to which they are near is greater—The joy to which we ought to help them is inconceiveable—The beauty and glory of the church is deſirable—Our difficulties and dangers are many and great—The comfort that attends a faithful ſtewardſhip is greater—But that which attends a full ſucceſs is inexpreſſible—And the honour conferred upon us who are called to be co-workers with God, and to ſubſerve the blood-ſhed of Chriſt for the ſalvation of men, is illuſtrious beyond compariſon—'The fields now ſeem white for harveſt;' for the preparations that have been made for us are great—The ſeaſon for working is now more warm and calm than moſt ages have been—We have careleſsly loitered in our work too long—The preſent time is poſting away: while we are trifling, men are dying, and paſſing in haſte to the eternal world!—And is there nothing in all this to awaken us to our duty, and to engage us to ſpeedy and unwearied diligence? Is it poſſible for a man to be too careful and laborious under all theſe motives and engagements?

Were but our ſouls clearly and deeply impreſſed with the very important truths we preach, eſpecially thoſe that relate to a future world, O what a change

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a change would it make in our ſermons, and in our private diſcourſe! If we did but know what it is for the ſoul to paſs out of the fleſh, to go before a righteous God, and enter on a ſtate of unchangeable joy or torment, and with what amazing thoughts dying men apprehend theſe things, how differently would ſuch matters be diſcourſed of! Oh the gravity, the ſerioufneſs, the inceſſant diligence theſe things require! I know not what others think of them; but for my own part, I am aſhamed of my ſtupidity, and wonder at myſelf that I deal no more with my own and other men's ſouls, as becomes one that looks for the great day of the Lord; — that I can leave room for almoſt any other thoughts or words, and that ſuch aſtoniſhing matters do not wholly take me up! I ſeldom come out of the pulpit, but my conſcience ſmites me that I have been no more ſerious and fervent. It accuſes me not ſo much for want of elegance or human ornaments, nor for letting fall an unhandſome word; but it aſks me—"How couldeſt thou ſpeak of everlaſting life and death with ſuch a heart? How couldeſt thou preach about heaven and hell in ſo careleſs and ſleepy a manner? Doſt thou believe what thou ſayeſt? Art thou in earneſt or in jeſt? How canſt thou tell people that ſin is ſo evil a thing, and that its conſequences are ſo dreadful, without being more affected with it? Shouldſt thou not weep over ſinners, even till thy tears interrupt

terrupt thy words? Shouldſt thou not 'cry aloud, 'and ſhew them their tranſgreſſions,' and ſhouldſt thou not entreat them to repent and believe, with the utmoſt importunity?"—Such is the peal that conſcience rings in my ears, and yet my drowſy ſoul will not be awakened. What a dreadful thing is a ſenſeleſs, hardened heart! Lord ſave us from the plague of infidelity, and hardneſs of heart! or how ſhall we be fit inſtruments of ſaving others from it? and do thou that on *our* ſouls, which thou wouldſt have us do on the ſouls of others!

I am even confounded to think what difference there is between my apprehenſions of the life to come in a time of ſickneſs and at other ſeaſons. O brethren, if you had converſed with death as often as I have done, and as often received the ſentence in yourſelves, you would have an unquiet conſcience, if not a reformed life with regard to miniſterial diligence. You would have ſomething within you that would often aſk you ſuch queſtions as theſe: "Is this all thy compaſſion for loſt ſinners? Wilt thou do no more 'to 'ſeek and ſave them?' Is there not ſuch and ſuch an one — are there not many round about thee, who are yet the viſible ſons of death? What haſt thou ſaid to them, or done for their recovery? Shall thouſands die and go to hell before thou wilt ſpeak one ſerious word to prevent it? Will they not there curſe thee for ever that thou didſt no more in

in time to save them?" Such cries of conscience are daily in my ears, though the Lord knows I have too little obeyed them. I confess that I seldom hear the bell toll for one that is dead, but conscience asks me, "What hadst thou done for the saving of that soul before it left the body? There is one more gone into eternity; what didst thou do to prepare him for it?"—When you are laying a corpse in the grave, how can you help reflecting with yourselves to this purpose: "Here lies the body, but where is the soul? What did I do for it before it departed? It was part of my charge; what account can I give of it?"

O sirs! is it a small matter to answer such questions as these? It may seem so now; but the hour is coming when it will appear otherwise. 'If 'our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our 'hearts,' and will condemn us more. We may plead the cause with conscience, and either bribe it, or endure its sentence; but God is not so easily dealt with, nor his sentence so easily borne. 'Wherefore we receiving (and preaching) a king-'dom which cannot be moved, let us have grace 'whereby we may serve God acceptably with re-'verence and godly fear; for our God is a con-'suming fire.'

Let me beseech you, brethren, on the behalf of Christ, for the sake of the church, of the immortal souls of men, and for your own souls sake, that you

you preſently and effectually ſet about the work which I have been principally recommending. Hearken to God and the calls of duty, if you would have peace of conſcience. I know that carnal wit never wants words, nor a ſhew of reaſon, to gainſay that truth and duty which it abhors. It is eaſier to cavil againſt duty than to perform it. But conſider how the matter will appear on a death-bed, and what account you will give to God at the great day. Conſcience will not own thoſe reaſons in a dying hour, which now it ſeems to admit. There is not that comfort to be had for a departing ſoul in the view of neglected duty, as of a life wholly devoted to the ſervice of God; and I am confident my arguments will appear ſtrongeſt at laſt, whatever they may do now.

O think how dreadful and aggravated our final condemnation will be, if we live and die wilful neglecters of the great work we have undertaken! Our parents that deſtined us to the miniſtry—our tutors that educated us for it—our learning and miniſterial gifts—our voluntarily undertaking the care of ſouls—all the care of God for his church—all that Chriſt has done and ſuffered for it—all the precepts, promiſes, and threatenings of the holy ſcriptures—all the examples of prophets, apoſtles, and preachers there recorded—and all the books in our ſtudies that tell us of our duty, or any way aſſiſt us in it, will riſe in judgment againſt us!—All the

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the ſermons that we have preached, to convince men of the danger of ſin, of the torments of hell, and the joys of heaven; to quicken them in their duty, or to reprove their neglect—all the maintenance we take for our ſervice—all the honour we receive from the people—and the miniſterial privileges we enjoy—all the witneſs we have borne againſt the neglects of miniſters—all the judgments and mercies of God with which we have been acquainted—all the fervent prayers of God's people that have been offered on our account—and finally, all our vows, promiſes, and reſolutions for diligence in our work, will at the laſt great day aggravate our condemnation, if we are found unfaithful in our maſter's ſervice.

Truly, brethren, if I did not apprehend the matter to be of exceeding great moment to yourſelves, to your people, and to the honour of God, I would not have troubled you with ſo many words about it, nor have preſumed to ſpeak ſo ſharply as I have done. But in an affair of life and death, men are apt to forget their reverence, courteſy, and compliments, commonly called good manners. For my part, I apprehend this to be one of the greateſt and beſt works that I ever put my hand to in my whole life. I verily believe you will agree with me herein; and if you do, you will not think me too prolix, or too plain and ſevere. As for *myſelf*, ſpare not; tread me as dirt in the ſtreets; let

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let me be as vile in your eyes as you please, so that you will but hearken to God and reason, and do your duty for the salvation of men. What am I but a servant of Christ? and what is my life worth, but to do him service? Whose favour can recompence for the ruins of the church? And who can be silent while souls are undone? Not I for my part, while God is my master, his word my rule, his work my business; and the success of it, for the saving of souls, my end. I know myself unworthy to be your monitor; but a monitor you must have; and it is better to hear of our sin and our duty from any body, than not at all. Receive the admonition, and you will see no cause, in the monitor's unworthiness, to repent of it. But remember, if you reject it, the unworthiest messenger may bear that witness against you which will shame and condemn you.

To conclude*: Let us set before us the exhortation, and the example given us in our text and context, and learn our duty from thence. This one passage of Scripture better deserves a whole year's study, than most things about which students are apt to spend their time. O brethren, write it on your study doors, or set it as your copy in capital letters continually before your eyes. Could we but learn

* This last excellent passage is transposed from the midst of the original work, as it seemed best adapted to form the best possible conclusion.

two

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two or three lines of it, what preachers ſhould we be! Here we are taught—Our general buſineſs; SERVING THE LORD—Our ſpecial work; TAKING HEED TO OURSELVES AND ALL THE FLOCK—The ſubſtance of our doctrine; REPENTANCE TOWARDS GOD, AND FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST—The places and manner of our teaching; PUBLICLY, AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE—The object and internal manner; WARNING EVERY ONE, NIGHT AND DAY, WITH ALL HUMILITY OF MIND, AND WITH TEARS—[The faithfulneſs and integrity that are requiſite; I HAVE KEPT BACK NOTHING THAT WAS PROFITABLE UNTO YOU; I AM PURE FROM THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN, FOR I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD]—The innocence and ſelf-denial to be uſed; I HAVE COVETED NO MAN'S SILVER OR GOLD—The patience and reſolution to be exerciſed; NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME, NEITHER COUNT I MY LIFE DEAR UNTO MYSELF, SO THAT I MIGHT FINISH MY COURSE WITH JOY, AND THE MINISTRY WHICH I HAVE RECEIVED OF THE LORD JESUS. ——And once more, The motives to engage us to all this; THE HOLY GHOST HAS MADE US OVERSEERS; the church we feed is THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.

Write

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Write this upon your hearts, and it will do yourſelves and the church more good than twenty years ſtudy of thoſe lower things which often employ your thoughts; which, though they get you greater applauſe in the world, yet, if ſeparated from theſe, will make you 'but ſounding braſs, 'and tinkling cymbals.'

The END of the REFORMED PASTOR.

APPENDIX;

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APPENDIX;

CONTAINING

Hints of Advice to STUDENTS * for the Miniſtry, and to TUTORS of Academies.

OF what great importance the character of the clergy is to the church and the ſalvation of men, thouſands have found to their joy and happineſs; and I fear, thouſands more to their ſorrow and deſtruction. Of what conſequence, then, the diſpoſition of CANDIDATES for the miniſtry is, needs not many words to ſhew. It is of unſpeakable importance, whether they prove good or bad.

God, who has inſtituted the ſacred office, and who, by his Spirit, qualifies men for it, uſually works according to their qualifications. As in the natural world he operates according to the fitneſs of natural ſecond cauſes, ſo in the moral world, ac-

* Much more on the ſame ſubject, may be found in other of our Author's writings. See particularly Vol. I. p. 254 & 714, et ſeq. where may be ſeen a long catalogue of books.

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cording to the suitableness of moral causes. Holiness, though in many respects it be a supernatural work, is usually wrought by holy means. Able and faithful ministers therefore are very great blessings. They are the 'lights of the world, and 'the salt of the earth.' Never was the gospel well propagated or continued in any country but by their means. God uses them as his instruments for convincing, converting, edifying, comforting, and saving of souls. Herein they are co-workers with Christ the great Saviour of souls, and with the Holy Spirit, who regenerates and sanctifies them. How many thousands of happy spirits in heaven will for ever rejoice in the effects of their labours, and bless God for them! In a word, churches, states, and kingdoms are chiefly blessed and preserved by the faithful part of the ministry. They are the means of subduing 'sin which is the de-'struction of a people,' and promoting 'righteous-'ness which exalteth a nation.'

On the other hand, unfaithful and wicked ministers are the worst and most hurtful men. Though they may be furnished with the same notions and words as godly teachers are, (though this is not usually the case) yet they will be greatly wanting in that serious delivery, which is ordinarily necessary to make the hearers serious christians. That seldom reaches the heart of the hearer, which comes not from the heart of the speaker. Constant

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ſtant experience tells us how different is the ſucceſs of reading or ſaying a pulpit leſſon, in a dull, or merely affected manner; and that of the judicious, ſerious explication and application of well choſen matter, which the experienced preacher well underſtands, and which he utters from the feeling of his ſoul. Neither the love of a benefice, nor of applauſe, will make a man preach in that manner which the love of God, the lively belief of heaven and hell, and the deſire of ſaving ſouls, will do. If a ſtage-hypocrite ſhould learn the art of preaching with an affected fervency and ſeeming zeal, yet art and paint will not reach the power and beauty of nature; nor will it hold out ſo long. Affectation uſually betrays itſelf; and when it is diſcerned, the hypocrite is lothed. But if he ſhould carry on his ſtage-affectation with plauſible art, the reſt of his miniſterial work will not be diſcharged in a manner anſwerable to it. Since it is from men that he expects his reward, in their ſight only he appears in his borrowed glory; in his private converſation and conduct, he makes a different figure. He will not ſet himſelf to inſtruct the ignorant, to ſave men from their ſins, and raiſe their minds to heaven, by praying with them, by holy diſcourſe, and heavenly deportment: he will not be at much coſt or labour to do any kind of real good.

But alas! by far the greateſt part of unexperi-

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enced preachers have not ſo much as the hypocrite's ſeeming zeal and appearance of religion to cloke their ſins, and profit their people. The miſ-behaviour of ſuch, is likely to make them exceedingly hurtful. By their ignorance, ambition, covetouſneſs, and other ſins, they render themſelves contemptible in the eyes of many, and by that means render the church and all religion ſo too. A ſcandalous clergy will be a ſcorned clergy; and a ſcorned clergy will prepare for the ſcorning and deſtruction of true religion. Alas! what wretched work have hypocritical, unexperienced, proud, worldly, voluptuous, ignorant miniſters been making in moſt chriſtian nations, theſe fourteen hundred years! Wo! wo! wo! to the church that hath ſuch paſtors! that hath wolves inſtead of ſhepherds! Wo to the land that hath ſuch! Wo to the princes and ſtates that follow ſuch counſellors! Wo to the ſouls that are ſubverted by them! From a corrupt clergy have ſprung the greateſt calamities of the church in all places to this day.

And let it be remembered, the ſins of ſuch men will not prove leſs miſchievous to themſelves than to others. Their guilt is aggravated by their perfidious violation of their baptiſmal and ordination vows, as well as by their nearneſs to God in their office; and they are condemned out of their own mouths. Such perſons are with greater difficulty brought to repentance than others; becauſe by wit and

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and ſtudy they have bended that doctrine to defend their ſin, which ſhould be uſed to bring them to repentance; or becauſe pride will not ſuffer ſuch perſons as they are, employed in ſo holy an office, and poſſeſſed of ſuch titles, learning, and reputation, to ſuppoſe themſelves in an unholy ſtate; and whoever accuſes them of ſin or reproves them for it will be repreſented as an enemy to the church. Their ulcers are as a *noli me tangere*, and fret as a gangreen unremedied. Their profanation of holy things makes them worſe, and more impenitent than other men; partly as they have more notoriouſly forfeited the grace of God which ſhould work repentance in them, and have cauſed him in righteous judgment to forſake them; and partly as they have hardened their own hearts, by long abuſe of that truth which ſhould have ſanctified them. For when perſons have long 'impriſoned the truth in 'unrighteouſneſs,' and long played, as hypocrites, with what they profeſſed to believe, cuſtom will ſo harden them, that their knowledge will have little power on their hearts.

And now do I need ſay any more to ſhew young men deſigned for the miniſtry, of what importance it is that they be well qualified for it? God can, and ſometimes does, turn wolves into faithful ſhepherds, and convert thoſe, who while they were unconverted themſelves, undertook to convert others; but this is not ordinarily to be expected. Firſt notions lie

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deepeſt, and make way for others that are connected with them. Falſe opinions, as well as true, are uſually linked together, and the chain is not eaſily caſt off or broken. Thoſe that have received errors have alſo received their defenſatives. Theſe are like the ſhell-fiſh, which carry their houſe about with them. They that have received them, have ſtudied what to ſay for them, but not what can be ſaid againſt them. But ſuppoſing that you have ever ſo true notions in your heads, if they come not with power upon your *hearts*, and do not make you new, ſpiritual, and holy men, they will not qualify you to propagate faith and holineſs. Now it is that you muſt get thoſe eminent qualifications of knowledge and holineſs, which you are afterwards to uſe; for how can you uſe what you have not? Though ſome prudent hearers will encourage ſuch young men as they think are hopeful, yet moſt will judge of perſons and things as they find them. The ignorant, dry, and lifeleſs orations of unexperienced preachers, will not be eſteemed by ſuch as know what judgment and ſerioufneſs that ſacred work requires. Few will praiſe, or feed on unſavoury food, merely to flatter and praiſe the cook. Then when you find yourſelves ſlighted, your reſentment will riſe againſt thoſe that ſlight you becauſe they are not contented with your unholy trifling, but all your enmity will turn againſt yourſelves, and, like that

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that of Satan againſt the members of Chriſt, will be but-ſelf-tormenting.

Let me then ſeriouſly caution all perſons againſt being too haſty in reſolving for the ſacred miniſtry. I would not diſcourage pious, prudent deſires and purpoſes, but I muſt ſay, that many parents, in this reſpect, prove greatly injurious to the church. I do not mean only worldly men, who look upon the miniſtry merely as a trade to live by, and ſend their ſons to the univerſity in order to their worldly maintenance and preferment; but even honeſt godly parents, who ignorantly think it a good work to deſign their children for the miniſtry, and call it "devoting them to God," without duly conſidering whether they are likely to be fit for it or not. When the children of ſuch perſons have been ſome years at the univerſity, they think a living is their due. Ordained they muſt be; what elſe have they ſtudied for? It is now too late to change their purpoſe, when they have been at ſo many years coſt and labour to prepare for the miniſtry. They are too old, or too proud, or too idle, to go to any manual labour, and have not time or opportunity to prepare for any other learned profeſſion. So that there is no way left but, for a benefice, to become church-mountebanks, or ſpiritual quacks, and undertake the paſtoral charge of ſouls; though they ſcarcely know what ſouls are, for what they were made, or whither they are going; at leaſt,

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how they muſt be conducted and prepared for their endleſs ſtate. And bad as they are, they can find perſons bad enough to recommend and ordain them. How deplorable is the caſe of the poor people's ſouls over whom they are to preſide!

In order to prevent any from intending the work of the miniſtry who are not qualified, I will briefly mention the neceſſary qualifications for it. The work is ſo high, and miſcarrying in it is of ſuch dreadful conſequence, that no one ſhould be reſolvedly devoted to the miniſtry who hath not the following endowments.

1. A good natural capacity. It ſhould be ſomewhat above the ordinary degree. Grace ſuppoſes nature; and by ſanctifying it, turns it the right way; but does not uſe to make wiſe teachers of natural drones, or weak-headed lads who have not ſenſe enough to learn.

2. A competent readineſs of ſpeech. One who cannot readily ſpeak his mind in common things, is not likely to have that fluent delivery which is neceſſary to a preacher.

3. He muſt be hopeful for godlineſs. He muſt be captivated by no groſs ſin. He muſt not only have a love to learning, but religion; to the word of God, and good company; to prayer, and good books. He muſt ſhew that he has a ſerious concern about his ſoul, and the life to come; that his conſcience is under ſome effectual convictions of

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of the evil of ſin, and the excellence and neceſſity of a godly life. The youth that hath not theſe qualifications, ſhould not be devoted to the miniſtry. To devote an incapable, ungodly perſon to ſuch an holy work, is worſe than of old to have offered to God the unclean for ſacrifice. To do it under pretence of hoping that he may have grace hereafter, is a preſumptuous profanation, and worſe than to deſign a coward to be a ſoldier, or a wicked, unſuitable perſon for a partner in life, in hope that they may become fit afterwards.

If therefore your parents have been ſo unwiſe as to dedicate that to God which was unfit for his acceptance, it concerns you quickly to look better to yourſelves, and not to run into the conſuming fire. You ought to be conſcious of your own condition. If you know that you want either natural capacity, or readineſs of ſpeech, or ſerious piety and heart-devotedneſs to God, do not meddle with that calling which requires all theſe.

Perhaps you will ſay, "What ſhall we do with ourſelves? We have gone ſo far, that we are fit for nothing elſe." I anſwer; You are leſs fit for the miniſtry than for any thing. That which requires the higheſt qualifications, will moſt ſhame and condemn you if you want them. If you are not fit for Phyſic or Law, ſeek for ſomething elſe. You had better become Servants, or turn to the baſeſt employments, than to run into the ſad caſe

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of *Hophni* and *Phineas;* or of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, to the utter undoing of yourſelves, and to the loſs and danger of many others.—But remember, if your unfitneſs be your *Ungodlineſs*, whether you are miniſters or not, you will be for ever miſerable, unleſs your hearts and lives be changed. When that is done, I would not diſcourage you; but (believe me) it is far better to be a cobler or a chimney-ſweeper, or to beg your bread, than to be an ungodly miniſter, though with the greateſt preferments, riches, and applauſe.

Perhaps parents will ſay, "If we devote none to the miniſtry till godlineſs appears in them, few will be ſo devoted, ſince children ſeldom diſcover much ſavour of religion; and ſome turn out bad, who when young, promiſed exceeding well." I anſwer; Children cannot be expected to ſhew that underſtanding in religion which men may; but if they diſcover not a love to it, a conſcientious regard to God's authority, and the life to come, and a diſlike of ungodlineſs and ſin, you have no reaſon to preſume they will be fit for the miniſtry. You can judge but upon probabilities; if they prove bad after an hopeful profeſſion, it will not be chargeable upon you. But we all know that a hopeful youth is a great preparation to an honeſt age.

Let me now drop a few hints of advice to ſuch young men, as have ground to hope they are qualified for the ſacred office.

I. Be

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I. Be careful [as far as depends upon yourſelves *] in the choice of your Tutors.

Chooſe not a teacher who prefers human wiſdom to divine, or who is of a worldly, ambitious mind; who is factious and uncharitable, or violent for any party; but one that bears a good report among the ſober and impartial, as a perſon of a chriſtian catholic charity; who loves good men; who is willing to do good to all, and is deſirous of maintaining unity and peace; one that will make it his buſineſs to explain the Scripture, to teach you the will of God, and how you may pleaſe him and be ſaved.

II. Abhor ſloth and idleneſs.

When you are at common ſchools, your maſter drives you on by fear; but when you are in a Univerſity, and are at riper age, you are truſted more with yourſelves; ſo that if you will not be carried on with conſtant pleaſure and the love of knowledge, the fleſh will prefer its eaſe, and you will proceed ſo ſlowly as to arrive at no high degree of learning. Then when you have gone through your ſtudies, and are called out to the uſe of your knowledge, your emptineſs and ignorance will ſoon appear. It is not your canonical habit, nor ſeven, nor ſeventeen

* This advice more particularly belongs to Parents and others, who have the care of youth.

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years ſpent in the Univerſity, nor the title of Maſter of Arts, or Doctor in Divinity, or Biſhop, which will paſs with men of ſenſe for knowledge, diligence, humility, patience, and charity; nor that (without theſe) will do the work to which you are devoted. Believe it, the high and neceſſary accompliſhments of a true divine, are not eaſily or ſpeedily attained.

III. Fear and fly from ſenſuality and fleſhly Luſts.

While your bodies are not fatigued with labours, nor your thoughts taken up with wants and cares; while you are entirely at eaſe, and your ſtudies are arbitrary, fleſhly appetites have time and opportunity to ſolicit your fancies, to incline you to interrupt your buſineſs and think about matters of ſenſual delight; either with what to pleaſe the palate in eating or drinking, or needleſs and hurtful recreations, or to read romances, play-books, and other corrupting vanities. Let me add, idle ſcholars are far more ſtrongly haunted, than poor labouring, and afflicted perſons are, with temptations to ſelf-pollution and other filthy luſts. And if theſe ſhould prevail, alas! you are undone! They will offend God, diſpel his grace, wound and ſcare your conſciences, deſtroy all ſpiritual affections and delights, and turn down your hearts from

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from heaven and holineſs to filth and folly. Beaſts will not be fit for the pleaſures or the work of ſaints. Away therefore from idleneſs. Pamper not the fleſh with fulneſs or delights. Abhor all time-waſting needleſs recreations. Away eſpecially from the baits of fleſhly luſts. Be no more indifferent or unreſolved herein, than you would be about drinking poiſon, or wilfully going among thieves and murderers. Preſume not on your own ſtrength: he is ſafeſt that is furtheſt from danger. Gunpowder muſt not ſtand near the fire.

IV. Make a prudent choice of your companions: eſpecially your boſom-friends.

Love and familiarity will give them great advantage over you. If they are wiſe, they will teach you wiſdom. If they are holy and ſpiritual, they will be drawing you towards God, and ſettling your averſion from ſin and love to holineſs. But if they are worldly and ambitious, they will be filling your heads with ambitious and worldly projects. If they are ungodly hypocrites, having only the name of chriſtians, they will be oppoſing or deriding ſerious godlineſs; and will plead for the formalities of religion as better than ſpiritual devotion. If they be hardened ſinners, they will try to make you ſuch, by revilings or plauſible cavils againſt the things and perſons that are contrary to their carnal inclinations

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nations and intereſts; and by endeavouring to poſſeſs your minds with falſe opinions of God's people. Ill company is a dangerous ſnare; but wiſe and religious companions are great bleſſings. Though the merciful providence of God does uſually chooſe them for us, it is only ſo as that we muſt be faithful chooſers for ourſelves.

V. Watch with great fear againſt ambition and worldly ends.

The roots of theſe mortal ſins are bred in us, and lie very deep. They often live, and even reign, where they are little ſuſpected; but wo to him that is conquered by them. 'Ye cannot ſerve God and 'Mammon. The love of the world is enmity 'againſt God.' How many, having eſcaped the temptations of ſloth and ſenſuality, have been overcome by this! Alas! how does this ſtream carry down the moſt pregnant wits, into the gulf of perdition! Yea ſome, who ſeemed very humble and mortified, while they had no great temptation, when wealth and honour have been ſet before them, have loſt their virtue before they were aware. Worldly intereſt has ſo biaſſed their underſtandings, that they have taken truth for error, and error for truth; duty for ſin, and ſin for duty. If you be the ſervants of the fleſh and the world, wo be to you

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you when your maſters turn you off, and you receive your wages!

VI. Another earneſt warning which I muſt give you, and all young men, is to guard againſt an unhumbled underſtanding, raſhly confident of its own apprehenſions.

This is the offspring of ignorance and pride, and is one of the moſt common and pernicious maladies of mankind. Among a multitude of perſons that differ from each other, how few are not obſtinately confident that they are in the right; even youths of twenty years of age. Oh dread this vice, and ſuſpect your own underſtandings. Be humble; take time; try and hear before you judge. Labour for knowledge; but take not upon you to be ſure where you are not; doubt and try till you are. Thoroughly ſtudy the nature and evidences of the chriſtian faith and doctrine. Do not haſten too ſoon or too confidently over theſe hard controverſies, as if your judgment of them at maturity would certainly have no change; but ſtill ſuppoſe that greater light, by longer ſtudy, may cauſe you to alter your opinions about ſuch matters of difficulty.

VII. With regard to your ſtudies, let me exhort you to begin with practical divinity.

Firſt

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Firſt ſettle your ſouls in a ſafe condition for life and death, and take God and heaven for your hope and all. If you do not ſo, you are not chriſtians indeed. But if you be here fixed by the grace of God, you will know what to chooſe and what to do. It will teach you to refer all worldly things to ſpiritual and heavenly ends, and to 'count all 'things but loſs for Chriſt,' and for that 'one thing 'needful, which ſhall never be taken from you.' This will ſave you from the greateſt evils, and give your minds continual peace; even that 'peace of 'God which paſſes all underſtanding.' Deal not ſo fooliſhly as to waſte many years in inferior arts and ſciences, before you have ſtudied how to pleaſe God and be ſaved.

I unfeignedly thank God, that by ſickneſs and his grace, he taught me early how to DIE; and by that means, how to LIVE: that he inclined me to ſtudy the holy ſcriptures, and many practical, ſpiritual, *Engliſh* books, till I had ſomewhat ſettled the reſolution and peace of my own ſoul, before I had gone far in human learning. I then found more leiſure and capacity to take in ſubſervient knowledge in its proper time and place. Indeed I had loſt moſt of my ſtudies of philoſophy and controverſial divinity, if I had fallen on them too young; or elſe ſhould have formed very crude notions about thoſe things, which require a riper judgment.

Read

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Read ſuch books as contain the eſſential principles of religion, and treat of them in the moſt plain, affectionate, and practical manner; tending to deep impreſſions, renovation of the ſoul, and ſpiritual experience; without which you will want the eſſential qualifications for your future work. The art of theology, without the power, conſiſting of holy life, light, and love, is the very conſtitution of the hypocrite.

Oh that all our ſtudents for the chriſtian miniſtry would think of theſe things? What a poor buſineſs is it to ſpend their time in knowing a little of the Works of God, and ſome of thoſe names that the divided tongues of the nations have impoſed on them, and not know the LORD himſelf, nor exalt him in their hearts, nor be acquainted with that one renewing work which would make them happy. They do but 'walk in a vain ſhew,' and ſpend their lives like dreaming men, while they ſo buſy their wits and tongues about an abundance of names and notions, and are ſtrangers to God and the life of ſaints. This they will acknowledge, if ever God awakens them by ſaving grace. They make themſelves a world of buſineſs about nothing, while they are wilful ſtrangers to the primitive, independent, neceſſary Being, who is 'all in all.' Nothing can be rightly known, if God be not known, nor is any ſtudy managed to any great purpoſe while God is not ſtudied. We know little of the creature, till we know it as it reſpects its Creator.

Single

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Single letters and ſyllables uncompoſed are nonſenſe. Such broken ſyllables are all creatures: as ſeparated from God they ſignify nothing. He that overlooks the 'Alpha and Omega,' and ſees not him in all, ſees nothing at all. It is one thing to know the creatures as *Ariſtotle*, and another to know them as a chriſtian.

To ſee God in his works, and to love and converſe with him, was the employment of man in his ſtate of innocence; and this is ſo far from ceaſing to be our duty now, that it was the work of Chriſt to bring us back to it. The moſt holy men are the moſt excellent ſtudents of God's works; nay none but the holy can rightly know or ſtudy them. 'His works are great, and ſought out 'of all ſuch perſons, who have pleaſure therein:' not for themſelves, but for him that made them. To ſee and admire, to reverence and adore, to love and delight in God as appearing to us in his works, and purpoſely to peruſe them for theſe ends, this is the true and only philoſophy: this is the right ſanctification of your ſtudies. Theology * (when you are ſufficiently acquainted with words and things, to underſtand the principles of it) muſt lay the foundation of all your ſtudies, and muſt lead the way in them all.—Once more,

* That is, *practical* divinity. Controverſial is ſtudied with moſt advantage after other ſciences, logic, mathematics, &c. ED.

VIII. Let

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VIII. Let me adviſe you not to begin the exerciſe of your miniſtry too boldly, in large or judicious auditories.

Overmuch confidence indicates pride, ignorance of your imperfections, of the greatneſs of your work, and the dreadful majeſty of God. Settle at firſt, if you can, a competent time, in the houſe of ſome ancient experienced paſtor, who has a ſmall chapel in the country and wants aſſiſtance. There you may learn as well as teach; and learn, by his practice, what *you* muſt practiſe. By preaching a few years to a ſmall, ignorant people, where you need not fear critical judgments, you will acquire boldneſs of ſpeech, and freedom of utterance, without that ſervile ſtudy of words, and committing your notes to memory, which will be tireſome, time-waſting, and lifeleſs. Thus you will be better prepared for more public places, if you ſhould be called to them, than you are ever likely to be by continuing among ſcholars in the univerſity, or by ſerving as chaplains in great men's houſes.

After theſe directions to STUDENTS *for the miniſtry, it may not be amiſs to add a few brief hints*

To TUTORS of ACADEMIES.

And I do in zeal for the good of the church, and their own ſucceſs in their moſt neceſſary labours, propoſe

propoſe it to the conſideration of all pious Tutors, whether they ſhould not, as early and as diligently read to their pupils, or cauſe them to read, the principal parts of practical divinity, as any of the ſciences? And whether theſe ſhould not go together from the very firſt? It is well that they hear ſermons; but that is not enough. If they have need of private help in Philoſophy, beſides public lectures, much more in Theology. I muſt preſume to tell you (pardon the cenſure from one ſo unfit for it, conſidering the neceſſity of the caſe) that it is a grand error, and of dangerous conſequence, in our chriſtian Academies, that young men ſtudy the Creature before the Redeemer, and ſet themſelves to Metaphyſics and Mathematics before Theology; ſince no one who has not the vitals of Theology is capable of going beyond a fool in Philoſophy; and all that ſuch perſons do, is but 'doting about queſtions, and oppoſition of 'ſcience, falſely ſo called *.' If Tutors would make it their principal buſineſs to acquaint their pupils with the doctrine of life, and labour to ſet it home upon their hearts; and ſo conduct the reſt of their inſtructions, that it may appear they are intended only as ſubſervient to this, it might be the means of great happineſs to the ſouls of men, the church of Chriſt, and the common weal. But

* 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

when

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when languages and philoſophy ingroſs almoſt all their time and thought, and inſtead of reading philoſophy like divines, they read divinity like philoſophers, this it is that blaſts ſo many in the bud, and peſters the church with unſanctified teachers. Hence it is that we have ſo many worldlings to preach the inviſible felicity, and ſo many carnal men to declare the myſteries of the ſpirit: I wiſh I might not add,—and ſo many Infidels to preach Chriſt, or ſo many Atheiſts to preach the living God.

Let tutors then begin and end with the things of God; reading God to their pupils in every thing. Let them ſpeak daily to their hearts, about thoſe things which muſt be wrought in their hearts, or they are undone. You are preparing them for the ſpecial ſervice of God; and muſt they not firſt have the ſaving knowledge of him whom they are to ſerve? Oh! think with yourſelves what a dreadful thing it will be to their own ſouls, and what a miſchief to the church of God, if they come out from you with carnal hearts, to ſo ſpiritual and ſo great a work! If you ſhould ſend but one half of them forth on a buſineſs for which they are unfit, what grievous work will they make in the church and in the world! Whereas if you are the means of their true converſion*, not only they themſelves, but

* The author conſidered himſelf as addreſſing tutors of *colleges*,

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but many ſouls to whom they ſhall preach, will have occaſion to bleſs you, and to bleſs God for your zeal and diligence; yea perhaps for one ſeaſonable word. When once their hearts are ſuitably affected with the doctrine which they ſtudy and preach, they will both ſtudy and preach it more heartily, than could otherwiſe be expected. Their own experience will direct them to the fitteſt ſubjects; will furniſh them with the beſt matter; and will quicken them to ſet it home. And let me obſerve, that the beſt of our hearers will feel and favour ſuch experimental preachers; who uſually leſs regard others, whatever may be their other accompliſhments.

leges, where he knew many unconverted youths were admitted as ſtudents; which, it is hoped, in private academies is not the caſe.

THE END.

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The *Critical Review*, after copious Extracts from this Work, concludes with the following paſſage. "In "cloſing theſe Volumes, we muſt repeat our thanks to "Mr. Palmer, both as a biographer and as an editor; "he has diſcharged what he has undertaken in a very be-"coming and creditable manner." *Crit. Rev.* for July 1806.

The Writers of *The Britiſh Critic*, in the No. for *March* 1808, p. 210, after a very high encomium on Mr. Orton, mention a former volume of his Letters [*viz. to a Young Clergyman*] with great commendation, and obſerve, "The preſent volumes may be conſidered as a Supple-"ment." After noticing ſome of theſe Letters as containing "many curious" as well as "important particu-"lars," they add, "The remaining Letters are full of "notices of opinions, perſons, and books, more curi-"ous, perhaps, to us, than to the Diſſenters them-"ſelves. The Notes and biographical Sketches, added "by the Editor, are judicious, and ſuch as the reader "will naturally wiſh to find. When we take up the "writings of Diſſenters, ſo generally found in Chriſtian "principles, we feel a ſenſible pain in the reflection, "that ſuch perſons ſhould be kept apart from the "church," &c. &c.

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